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THE CHURCH  
IN THY HOUSE.

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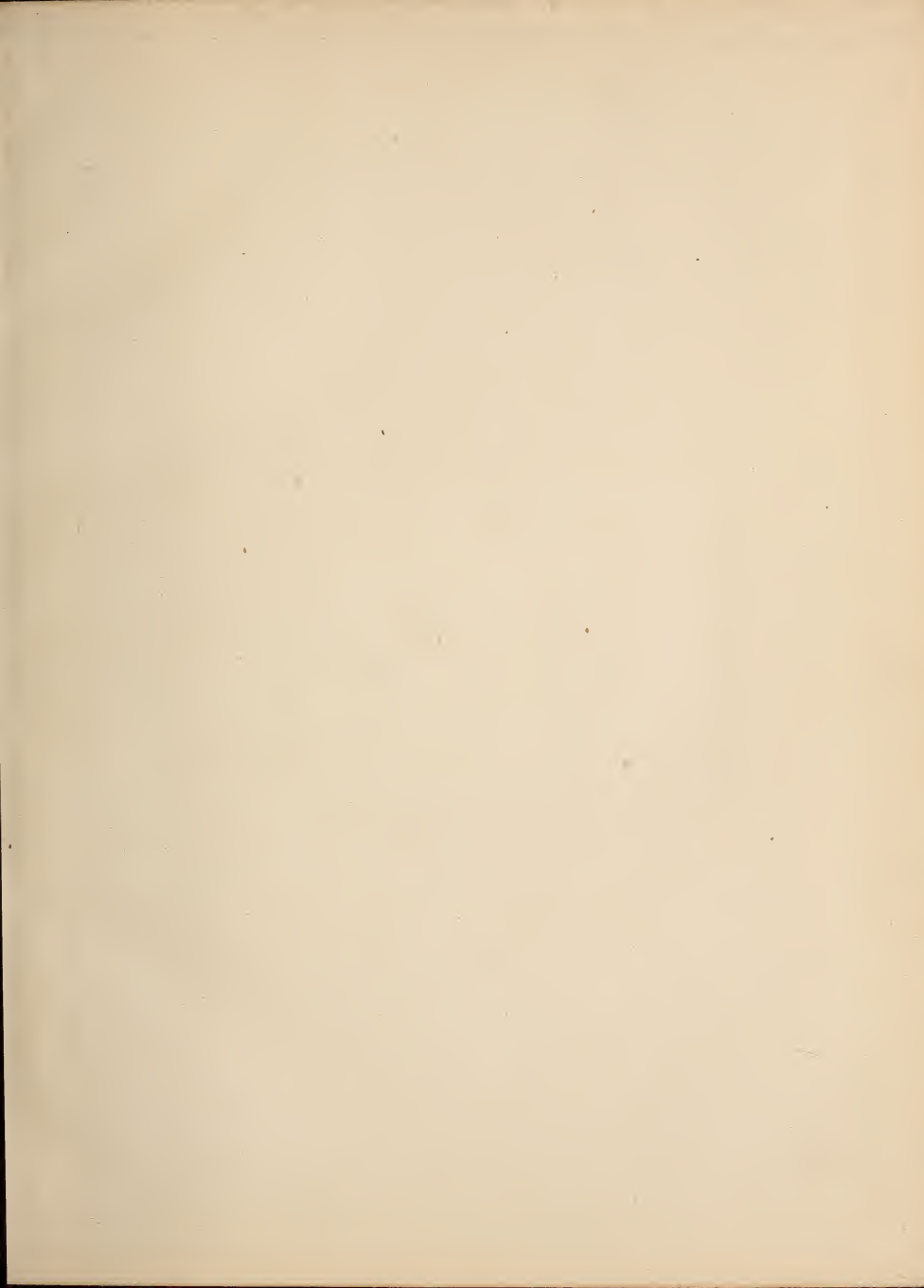
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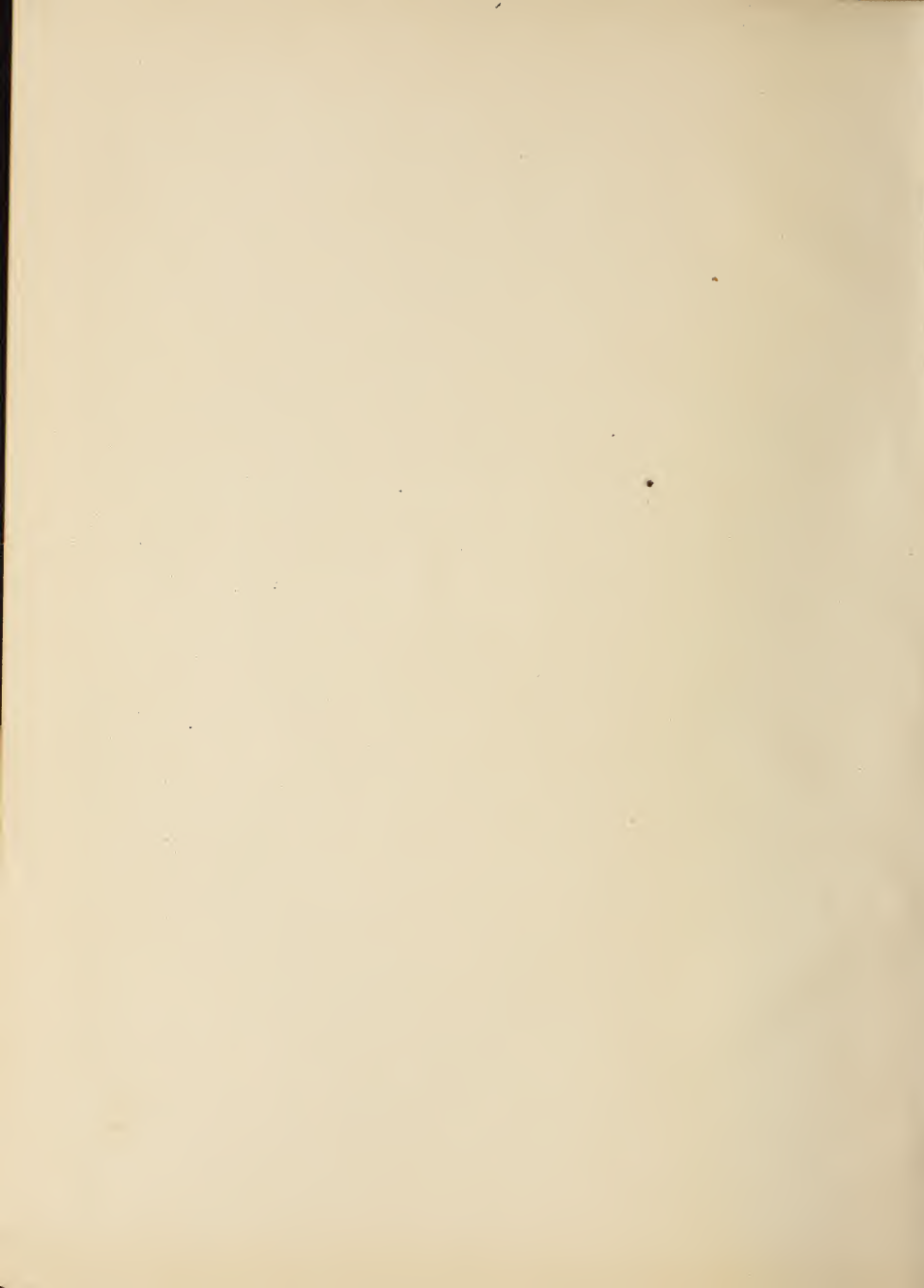
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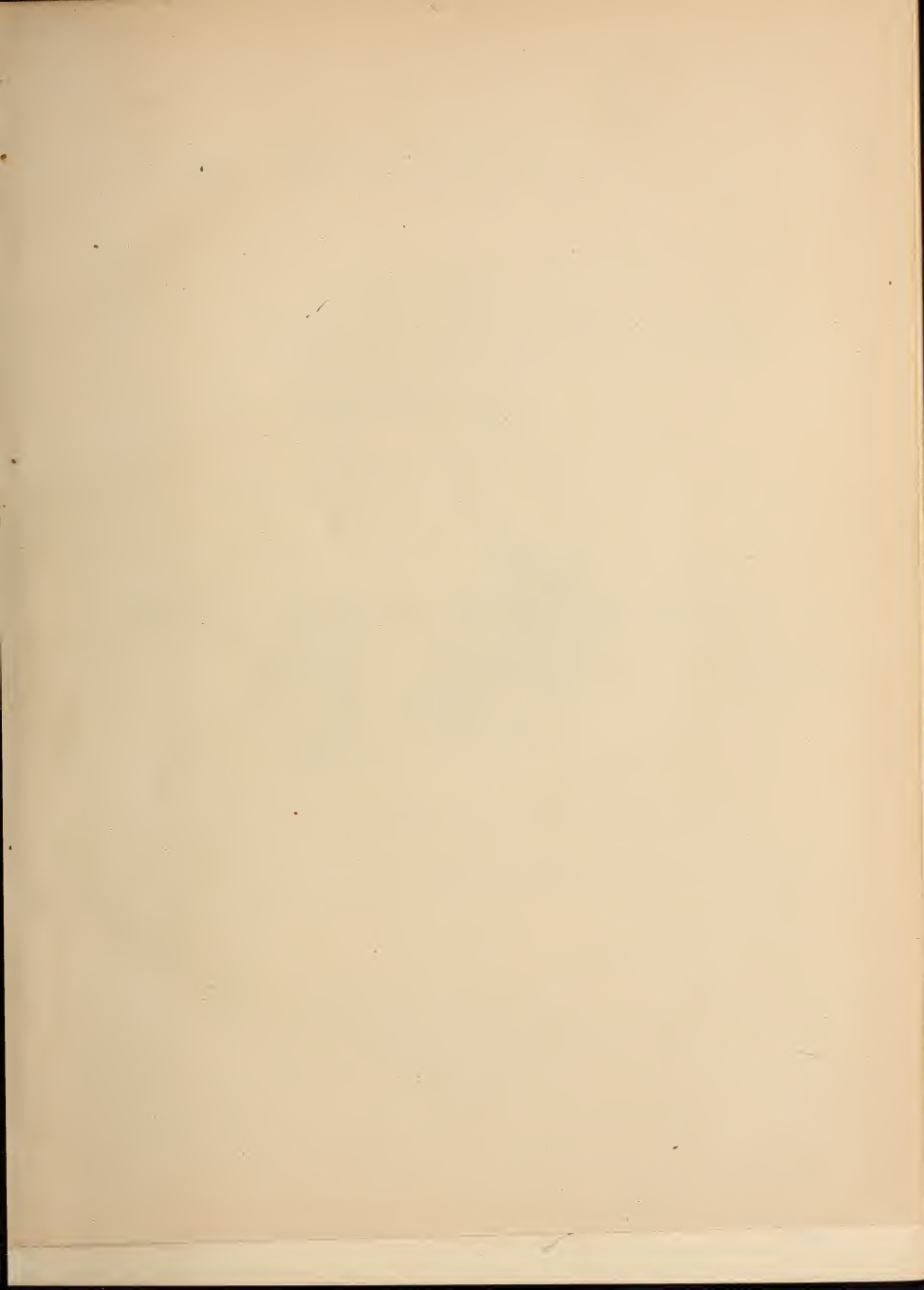
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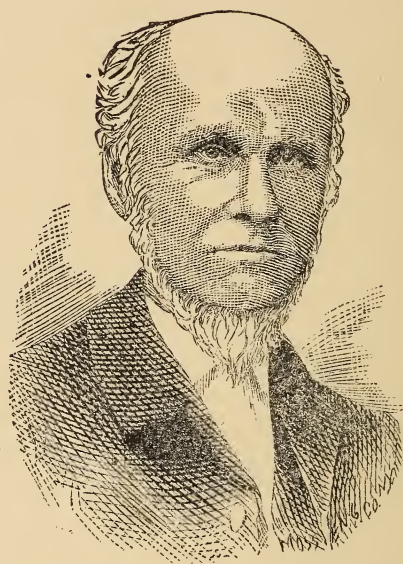
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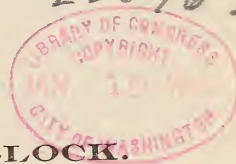
THE CHURCH

IN THY HOUSE,

OR

THE ALTAR AT HOME.

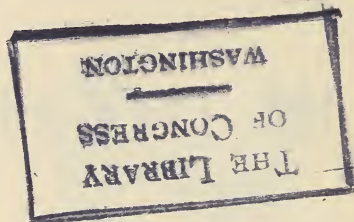
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BY REV. B. WHILLOCK.

FALL RIVER, MASS.,  
B. R. ACORNLEY & Co., PRINT,  
54 POCASSET ST.  
1894.

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## INTRODUCTION.

Introductions are generally wrote after the following matter has been written; and though placed first, are oft times read by persons last, or not at all; but supposing you read here before you go further, let me tell you the writer having for years been much impressed with a sense of the duty of Christians to attend to family prayers, and by observation, and information formed an opinion, that a great many church members do wholly, or in part, neglect this duty, I thought I would prepare and preach a sermon on the subject. Study on the same developed into what is presented in the following pages more like an essay than a sermon. Being advised by some to have it printed, it is now offered to the public. Since the manuscript has been sent to the printer, a minister's wife has told me that, not only some private members, but there are ministers also who neglect family prayer. If so, how are those, who ought to be mighty, fallen! Yet I will not tell it in Gath—nor will I publish their names in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Phillistines rejoice to spread the scandal. (1 Sam. i: 20.)

When you have read the following pages—submitted to your judgment, please answer in your own minds the succeeding questions:—

- CHAPTER V.—There should be discretion as to length of the prayers, reading or singing at the family devotion. 39
- CHAPTER VI.—The morals of the parents should in other respects be consistent with the holy priesthood of the family altar. 43
- CHAPTER VII.—Family prayer constantly and consistently carried out is a criterion of personal piety. 47
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# The Church in Thy House;

(PHILEMON 2.)

## OR THE ALTAR AT HOME.

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*"I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him."—Gen. xviii: 19.*

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### CHAPTER I.

LET US CONSIDER THE NATURE OF HOUSEHOLD RELIGION—WHICH INCLUDES DEVOTION AND INSTRUCTION.

In patriarchal times there was the knowledge of and duties to God and man handed down as we may well suppose, by tradition from Adam and Noah; but it does not appear there was any written sacred book, as a revelation from God until the time of Moses; and we imagine the first was the giving of the law by God vocally—attested by remarkable circumstances, witnessed by thousands of people—then an engraved or written copy of the Ten Commandments on stone, which had been verbally listened to by the assembled multitudes. Therefore in the early ages the personal and domestic services were mostly reverent

supplications and sacrifices, offered for sin from the time of Adam.

By Cain and Abel sacrificial altars were erected, and offerings made in connection with personal and family worship. The localities of such altars were sanctuaries of God long before the Tabernacle and Temple were made. The places of the altar were for family and household gatherings, to perform their devotions to their good Creator, and at the death and burning of animals confession was made of guilt, and prayer offered for pardon through the typical sacrifices.

It would seem before Noah built a house for himself and family, he built an altar, and from that date, 4700 years, I suppose the term "*Family Altar*" has been handed to us and now implies *the family worship*, and continues to designate the household congregation assembled for religious service at home. The histories of persons and events in the early ages were brief and partial, but in various instances where we find the mention of pious persons and families it includes their family devotions.

Abraham at God's command to go from his native land to Canaan, which God promised to his posterity, went there, and when he had reached the country where he was a stranger, there he built an altar unto the Lord, though the native ungodly Canaanites (Gen. xii: 7, 8) were in the land—yet he selected places for sacrificial worship, the nucleus of sanctuaries to the true God. For perhaps these were the only visible churches

in that land. His was a life of travel, but he took his religion with him, for he went further south, yet there he raised another altar and "called upon the name of Jehovah." Famine induced him to go into Egypt, but when he came back he came to the place of the altar, where his tent had been at the beginning, and again he called on the name of the Lord, (Gen. xiii: 4.) God told him to walk through the land; he did so, and when he came to Mamre there also he built an altar unto God. (Gen. xiii: 18.) Abraham was rich in silver, gold and cattle, and had many servants, as we may infer, for after he had left sufficient number of persons to feed and guard his cattle, he selected 318 men to pursue after the armies that had taken Lot and others captive. Concerning these 318 men we are told they were born in his own house, and *were trained* servants; in the margin they are called "instructed." (Gen. xiv: 14.) Abraham was rich, but not so rich as to fail to feel his dependence on God—he had many cattle, to be attended to, but had human beings also to be cared for, for they had understandings that needed to be enlightened, morals that needed to be regulated, souls that needed to be led by precept and example up to God, as they witnessed from the altars unto God above the rising flame and smoke. As a patriarch he was not only prince in his tribe, but priest at his altar, and teacher of his household congregation. Abraham had much live stock to look after on the hills of the unfenced country they roamed through; he had many business calls, but not so much business as to



cause him to neglect the altar duties; he had many orders to give relating to his herds, but his hired servants had to be taught. Though Abraham had not the Old nor New Testament, nor had he even a copy of the Ten Commandments, yet he instructed his household. Now, how much better are parents and masters supplied with books to teach their families and servants than he was? and yet Abraham was as a preacher giving religious knowledge to those about him, for thus said the Lord of this pious man: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. (Gen. xviii: 19.) Christian professors, church members, who are parents and employers may do well to study the practice of Abraham in this respect, and with a whole Bible in hand, to say nothing of other good books, instruct those about them, and lead them round the family altars to the God of grace. They who do as Abraham did may be counted as the seed of Abraham; but how shall those who neglect to do as Abraham did, expect like Lazarus in heaven, to find a friendly place in the protection of Abraham's bosom?

There are some heads of families defective in authority, especially in regard to controlling their children and servants in attendance at family prayers. Perhaps the defect has originated in the laxity of the parents themselves in not performing their own duty in regard to this service; or their want of a *conscientious* sense of the *importance* of the same, and this may be for want of duly studying the matter. If they are



really ignorant of their obligations in this respect no wonder they are vascillating, and sometimes neglect its performance; therefore they lose their authority over those it is their privilege to govern. What if a sea captain acted so with his crew—or a general with his army? Want of firm discipline will probably result in a defeat. It was not so with Abraham; he was not undeterminate, undecisive. For God asserts “I know Abraham that he *will command* his family and his household after him.” Without being dogmatical, there is a way for Christian parents and masters in this respect, to *command* in love, so as to gain uniform and respectful compliance, and make the attendants enjoy the exercises at the home sanctuary. Abraham was a patron and a pattern of household religion, and God said in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. Christ said, “Search the Scriptures, in them (ye children of Abraham) ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.” For

FURTHER, HOUSEHOLD RELIGION EMBRACES NOT ONLY PRAYER AND DEVOTION, BUT INTELLIGENT INSTRUCTION.

When the descendants of Abraham became a nation God gave them civil laws to govern them, religious rites to save them from Pagan ceremonies. God gave them also moral laws to regulate their dealings with mankind—He added also spiritual precepts, having doctrines suited to them as rational, devotional and intelligent beings. He ordained a public Tabernacle for their assembled congregations, priests to instruct the

people and to lead their public devotions; but all this was not intended to do away with family prayers, and home instructions by the heads of the households.

The Israelites as a nation were the first that were favored with a Divinely spoken and written law, given at Sinai. The giving of these heavenly mandates, was witnessed publicly by hundreds of thousands, attended by the trumpet voice of God, thunder, lightning, quaking of the mountain and the smoking thereof. These laws, and others given by God's command through Moses, were to be matters for parents to teach their children at home. For God by Moses said to the Israelites, "What nation is there so great and hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before thee this day? only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart, all the days of thy life, but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." (Deut. iv: 7-9. Then it is repeated, "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach (or as it is in the margin from the Hebrew, "whet, or sharpen) them, that as a keen fine sharp edged knife, they may cut into the hearts of "thy children" and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, (that is in the evening) and when thou risest up" (say in the morning). Deut. vi: 6, 7.

The early teachings of religious doctrines has been, I think, more generally practiced by the Jews and the

Roman Catholic Church, than is practiced by some, perhaps by many church members of the Protestant denominations in our days. There are no class of persons I suppose more deeply imbued with their religious opinions than the Jews and Roman Catholics. They are generally so fixed in their notions that it is hard to turn them from their doctrinal and practical views; but if Protestant Christians, would twice a day teach their children Bible truth while they are young, probably not two in a thousand, would depart from the theory of these principles, and a great bulk would likely embody them in their practice. How many parents whom I now address do this *daily* to say the least, or as I understand it the Israelites were required twice a day to teach orally the Scriptures to their children? or as I have before shown to "whet," or "sharpen" these truths till they become as a sharp two-edged sword to penetrate the understandings and to cut into the feelings of the hearts of the children. These Divine words of wise parents, with Solomon as a witness, are as goards (sharpened points) and as nails, fastened as by masters in family assemblies in a sure place. (Eccles. xii: 11.) As it was enjoined upon the Jews, so it is the duty of Christians to "Train up a child in the way he should go," and rely by faith on the promise, "When he is old he will not depart from it," but a parent never trains his children rightly, however good his church profession is, if he neglects teaching Bible truths to his children, and prayer with them at home. By such omissions he or she is a neglecter of most important duties.

The religious education of the family began, and still comes in importance before the material church building—yet home religion and public church services have been married together by God, and they are not two, but one in spirit and duty, and therefore what the Lord hath wedded together let no man or woman put asunder; for it would not be good for either of these to be alone even if we could tenant Paradise.

Connected with the altar at home there are these prominent features: the one is to send our petitions to God, the other is to receive communications from Him in reading the Bible. In the one human beings utter prayers, in the other, the all wise God gives instructions to make us wise unto salvation. We should not ignore our needs, and these should prompt our solicitations. Fully as much, or more time and attention, should be used in listening to the proclamations of the Eternal King, as to the cry of we poor beggars, and if there is only time allowed to one of these at the altar, we may well say, "Speak Lord, Thy servants will hear." By prayer we can add nothing to God's knowledge, but by reading the Scripture we may learn the wisdom that cometh down from the Father of light; besides when the Bible is being read we should have in us a devout feeling, that is a spirit of prayer. Once when I was staying a night at the house of one called a Quaker, not knowing the hour of their morning devotions, I came down too late for their reading the Scriptures. When I entered the room they were sitting in silent prayer. If some persons think they have not the gift of vocal

prayer, let them read, and then like those pious "Friends" for a few minutes wait on the Lord in silence. Whether prayer is uttered in the hearing of man, or in silence, it must be in a sincere spirit, for God is a spirit, and he seeketh such to worship Him that do it in spirit and truth.

Having gleaned from the Old Testament the duties, character and basis of household religion we may study.



## CHAPTER II.

PERSONS WHO OUGHT TO BE INCLUDED IN THESE DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES. 1, PARENTS; 2, CHILDREN; 3, SERVANTS; 4, VISITORS.

1. THE PARENTS. It is a happy circumstance when husband and wife are both converted, but some times unfortunately one is not. In such a case the professed Christian may be timid to attempt commencing this duty at home. Probably they are mutual in natural affection, also in temporal business matters; but cannot feel equally communicable on Christian experiences and the expressions of devotional feelings, nor the exercise of worship in the family. So it will seem a cross to begin the duty, fearing it may not be agreeable to the none professor; yet possibly these fears of the timid newly converted partner are not warranted. The unconverted person will likely expect the other to suggest and take the lead in duty at the family altar, and if there is no attempt to institute the same after the converted one has joined the church, and thus made a public profession, the unregenerate one may have cause to doubt the consistency, if not the sincerity of such a professor. And unless the carnal husband or wife is not extremely perverse it is very likely there will be no direct opposition to family devotions, and Scripture



reading, even if the unconverted one does not perform some part of the duties. Indeed, if he or she does not exercise in prayer, may be, such a one may be willing to read the Scriptures or take verse for verse with others who do read; thus by doing something at it they will feel so much the more interested in family worship; but if so far neglected from this very time begin, dare to do right. I feel assured when you have broken the ice, by establishing such services at home, you as a Christian parent will not only feel a conscientious satisfaction that an important duty has been performed, but that a spiritual, moral and an intellectual battle has been fought and a victory won.

Recently I heard the Rev. F. Howes, Baptist minister of Harrington, speak of a young woman whom he had formerly baptised at Camden, Del., a year or two ago. She had lately been taken sick, but when the doctor visited her on Sunday morning he said that there was no appearance of immediate danger to her life. During that same day in conversation with a female friend, she said she felt condemned that she a member of a church and her mother also had not attempted and established family prayer, though her father was not a pious man. That day, contrary to the express opinion of the medical man, that young woman died. The doctor said death was caused by heart failure. How many who may hear of this case are acting, or omitting, like this young woman and her mother the service at home? What is your reason? Are you afraid to take up the the cross, before father, brother, wife or boader? Or

are you indifferent and careless so as to miss Christian duty? Do you really feel contented to live as part of a household that has no family altar? As a believer in the Bible you cannot plead ignorance that you ought at least attempt to carry it into practice! If you now see it is a Christian duty will you not from this day act on it? He who knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin. Are you willing your sun should go down, and your life suddenly end under a cloud of condemnation, for a continued neglect, like that young woman? To remedy such omission there is no work or device in the grave, where we must all go.

I have since learned that the mother now conducts family devotions at her home, not only in affectionate remembrance of her late daughter's pious convictions, but as a Christian duty. Not taken up as a cross, but a privilege and a blessing.

But I am not addressing all parents who are unequally yoked together; for some are both members of the church, yea go to the house of the Lord together, you speak in class, likely you are not silent in prayer meetings; you like to see penitents at church come to the altar to ask God to convert their souls; yea likely you sing, pray and talk with such to get them justified. So far all right. But how about the beautiful little olive plants growing up round your own table? The little immortals, humanly speaking, you have been the cause of their deathless existence, do you daily gather them round your family altar? Do you read or cause to be read in your home to these the Word of God?

Are you pleading in their hearing for your own children to be born again? What occasionally zealous for strangers to be converted and neglect your own offspring? The ancient Bereans were more noble, more honorable than some other persons because they daily searched the Scriptures to see if the Christian teachings were true or not. Would you wish your children to grow up in heathen ignorance, and not be trained at home to devotion? If you have never erected a family altar, or if through neglect it has been broken down, arise, rebuild, If the morning and evening sacrifices have been neglected bring at once your offerings of broken and contrite hearts. If worldly cares or human fears as chilly winds have blown away all live coals and scattered the last spark of devotion from the cold altar at home—like Abraham get new wood for sacrificial fuel (Gen. 22: 6-7). Set this in order—pray to the God of Elijah to answer by fire, never rest until you get a flash from heaven, or by the hands of the angel of the covenant a live coal from off the celestial altar to rekindle a sacred fire at home. There may it to God's glory burn with unextinguishable blaze. The duty is so plainly laid upon Christian parents I cannot understand how any parent can live in a justified state of grace who carelessly neglects family devotions and Bible instructions at home. The law and teachings of Moses required this thousands of years ago. Jesus was raised as a prophet like unto Moses—and He and His gospel requires the little ones to be brought to Him, but if this is constantly omitted at home we fail to hear

Moses and his prophetic successor in all things. (Deut. xviii: 15; Acts vii: 37.) Yet God says, "*I will require it of him.*" (Deut. xviii: 18.)

2. The children, sons and daughters, of a family accordingly as they are impressed, so will they become impressors, first in the objective case, then in the nominative case—as they are first systematically led, so in turn they may become leaders; commanded well first, then be themselves commanders in the militant church at home. Youth is a yielding impressable element, properly impressed such are likely to become important factors. Hundreds of the most pious, intelligent and useful persons have been well trained in their childhood. Human habits are not all born with children, they are mostly formed for them, on and in them. If a child at home is repeatedly impressed by Paganism, Mohommadism, Popery, Judaism, or Evangelical Christianity—so will his knowledge, convictions, and habits be to a great extent. I do not say these circumstances, however good, will regenerate the soul; but such will go a great way towards forming the character, until other influences stronger, inward or outward influences act otherwise, for good or bad. Children well lighted with gospel truth by consistent parents will be trained to the same; but if parents are ever so high in public church profession, and neglect personal and family religion at home, their children may either think religion a sham, or their parents hypocrites, and profess what they do not possess or practice. So that mould of character will tend to cast a son or daughter in the



like form of their defective parents. As young children should attend such devotions at home, so more matured sons and daughters ought never to be thought too far advanced in years, or intelligence to be present. Noah's sons and their wives were worshippers at the first family altar after the flood. (Gen. viii: 20; Gen. ix: 9.)

When Jacob had sons grown to maturity he wandered in Canaan, and God said unto him, "Arise and go up to Bethel \* \* \* and build there an altar unto God \* \* \* and Jacob said unto his household," sons and daughters, "and all that were with him, put away the strange Gods that are among you." (it seems some of his servants as heathens; were worshipers of idols) "and be clean and change your garments, and let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way that I went. So Jacob came to Bethel and all the people that were with him." (Gen. xxxv: 1-7.) Here came Jacob's manly sons, yea, "all the people that were with him" circling round the family altar, a pattern for Christian families, parents, sons, daughters and servants. From childhood, as most now can read, and Bibles now are cheap, children ought to take turns in reading verse for verse or the whole Scripture lesson in rotation as persons partly forming the domestic congregation. I have generally found that even young children do really delight to officiate in this manner, and it does them good in more ways than one. Here they learn the primary and foundation principles of good government to honor father

and mother and to obey them—and so with other doctrines, histories and duties. Here the knowledge of the only Deity is taught and children led to “remember their Creator in the days of their youth,” &c. They are brought under the practical habits of prayer to their Maker and Saviour so on to know the whole duty of man. The parents who do not train their own children at the family sanctuary provide not spiritually for their own household, in this respect they deny the faith and are worse than infidels. (1 Tim. v: 8) No family, well up in worship at home will be personally or publicly defective, but if religion does not rule them at home their character may be a fair show outwardly, yet not substantial; like a bubble it may for a time be beautifully rounded, but as it is expanded only by wind so the prick of a needle will cause it to burst.

3 Persons employed in that family ought to hear the Scripture read and the prayers offered. Several reasons might be stated in support of this opinion, but accept the example of Abraham and God’s verdict on it. The Lord said, “I know him that he will command his children and his *household* after him, and they shall keep the ways of the Lord,” &c. (Gen. xviii: 19.) Those who act like Abraham are the spiritual seed of this friend of God, and will be blessed with him. The domestic servants ought to be present both at reading of the Bible and prayers. Some may object as if that much time is lost for which wages have to be paid; but as the duration of time for family worship is seldom more than a few minutes I think it will well repay em-



ployers to let their hands hear the Word of God which inculcates diligence, truthfulness, honesty and faithfulness to their masters, as well as justice in employers. Servants and masters need to be frequently reminded of their obligations; and there is no better teacher of these than the Bible. To induce servants to be diligent in business, all legitimate influences should be brought to bear on them to become "fervent in spirit serving the Lord." But to omit their attendance at the family altar is neglecting a valuable influence calculated to make them good servants.

I knew a firm named Groom, two brothers members of a Methodist Church, at Wellington, Salop, England, timber merchants. They sawed a deal of wood, for house, railway, and other purposes, besides manufacturing various articles themselves. They employed a number of men who were paid by the day. In the morning at the hour their work and pay began the men were required to be in a certain work shop where a lesson from the Bible was read and prayers offered. Sometimes the masters officiated, other mornings one or more of the men read or prayed; there were some local preachers among them, besides other Christian men. This was done in the time the masters paid them wages for same as if working. Suppose 15 minutes were used each morning in such exercises for 100 persons, that would be equal to 25 hours daily. Do you think it was a loss to that business firm? I judge they did not think it was. They got repaid in the honesty, and increased industry of their men. God's Word so read daily did

not return to him void, but accomplished the end to which it was sent—to make better servants, better masters, and better parents at home. If in this country colored people are the servants, as a Cristian, I do not know of any reason why such should not be part of this home congregation. Pious instruction will do them good to receive, and their employers good to impart, remembering in this relation the words of the Lord Jesus, that it is *more blessed to give* than to receive, remind us again of Abraham and his 318 servants all instructed *in his own house* (Gen. xiv: 14).

4. Friends visiting the family ought not be obligated to attend the family devotions, but by all means they should be respectfully invited to do so, and as a matter of good behaviour they, will rarely refuse. No consistent Christian will dispense with their household religion because there is a visitor with them. Let there be no such omission of worship while visiting at that house, so he may not go away with a notion that there was no family altar in that home. But if there are earnest devotions, he may feel he has been at a means of grace, and it may lead him when he returns home to do likewise. No matter if he is a member of some other sect, or a ungodly individual, or even an infidel, it had not ought to be that a visitor should require the Godly rules of the family to be put aside because of a visitor. And as I have stated, after a respectful invitation, if such will not attend, the worship ought nevertheless not to be neglected by the family.

### CHAPTER III.

THE PERSONS WHO MAY OFFICIATE AT THE FAMILY DEVOTION, (1) THE MASTER, OR FATHER OF THE FAMILY, (2) THE MISTRESS, OR MOTHER OF THE FAMILY, (3) GIVING THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS SOME PART OF THE SERVICE (4) PIOUS SERVANTS.

1. The master or father of the family, he by all means should to be the leading official; all ought to find him to be the high priest of his household—the influence of a father, puts him in a position to command all under him and about him. Refer to all Scriptural instances, and find the father named as the leader at the family altar. But if he is not the principle in this business, it resembles a firm to save which from insolvency, the business and transactions are done in the name of the wife, or some other party. His dignity is lowered and the crown is fallen from the head of the prince of this domestic dominion.

2. Yet the mother is second in command in the home and should be qualified and willing to take charge if needs be. Circumstances may some times require for her husband to be absent. Now if none but he has officiated, it is likely the services will not be performed if he is distant. Therefore it is good policy to say the least of it, that the wife sometimes should take the lead

or do some part of the service even in the presence of the husband, and generally she should share in the reading of the Scripture, thus the habit will be formed. Years ago I have stayed sometimes all night at Chebsey vicarage—residence of the Rev. L. Panting, he was a noted temperance advocate—and sometimes at public meetings he was many miles away from home late at nights; his wife a very worthy Christian woman, in his absence officiated as the priestess at her household family altar. As I have been witness of her skill in reading, so I have noticed the emphatic utterance of her devout prayers. If all depends on one as the household chaplain, though it be a Christian father, there may sometimes come on him seasons of Spiritual depression, then how delightful it will be to have a pious wife to lead the prayer, reading and singing, she as a true “help-meet” for him and with him in his presence and specially needful in his absence.

If Christian mothers fully performed their duties at the family altar, in prayer with, and for their children, and teaching them from the Word of God, it might be impossible to tell the blessed effects on their sons and daughters,—and through them on other persons, yea on individuals not yet born.

Much has been said of the great influence on the world through the piety and labors of John Wesley,—but his mother paid much religious attention to her family, and especially to John, who about the last minute had been saved from the burning house. So that



to her belongs the honor of being the mother of the Methodist Israel.

The father of John Wesley was oftentimes absent from his home, his curate then officiated in his church, but Mrs. Wesley attended well to the family duties at home, when her husband was away; and frequently her neighbors came to the house, and she instructed them also.

In regard to admitting the neighbors to the house and Mrs. Wesley reading to and instructing them, her husband wrote to her, as he thought she went beyond the duties of a woman. She replied to him. Here is an abstract from her letter:

"As I am a *woman*, so I am mistress of my family, and though the superior care of the souls lies upon you, as head of the family, and as their minister, yet in your absence I cannot but look on every soul you leave under my care, as a talent committed to my trust by the great Lord of all the families of the earth and heaven."

If some mothers object, because they are not so talented as was Mrs. Wesley, let us remind ourselves, he that was supplied with only one talent, was held responsible for that, and was condemned for not using that one.

Sister, shake your talent out of the napkin--rub the rust off your talent, brighten it, and use it.

Let me add the statement of the Rev. T. L. Cuyler on the power of mothers. "For four and forty years

I have been preaching the good tidings of the Word, and would not change places with a king, but I doubt if I ever would have been drawn to the service of Christ Jesus, but for the faithfulness of that home preacher who rocked my cradle. At the starting point of nearly every minister's life, stands a Christian mother. Dr. Potts requested all of us students in Princeton Theological Seminary, who had praying mothers, to rise up, and in an instant nearly the whole, one hundred and fifty, were on their feet. There we stood, living witnesses of the power of a mother's prayers, and a mother's shaping influence and example."

Reader are you a mother? In you is hidden a talent, a tremendous power, for good or for evil. which will almost imperceptibly model the life and character of your children. A mother's influence sent Samuel from home to the Tabernacle to become a prophet. Wicked Jezebel trained her son Ahaziah to the worship of Baal, and when sick, he sent to enquire at the Shrine of Baalzebub if he should recover, instead of praying to the true God.

Mothers do you neglect your duties at the Altar of Jehovah in your houses? Then how can you expect your sons to become Godly?

3. The sons and daughters of pious church members when sufficiently matured in age and intelligence should at least occasionally be required to do some part of the service even in the presence of their parents. The practice will improve their skill in their

duties and make them feel a greater interest in the service—and so prepare them to act rightly when the time comes to build an altar of their own. As before remarked, the younger children who are able to read, should take verse for verse in reading, and all should unitedly join in the Lord's prayer.

An aged Godly woman in Harrington, named Mack, informed me that some time immediately after her marriage, she and her husband resided with his parents. Domestic worship was regularly conducted. The household consisted of five persons. Each day one of these five lead in prayer, so the talents of every one got used. A good practice worth imitating.

4. If there be present pious domestic servants, male or female—such should be invited to take some part occasionally in the exercises, as well as being present; for at the throne of grace before God, who is not so much a respecter of personal rank as a discriminator of character, all are equally his children if equally pious. It is said, the Duke of Wellington was once kneeling by the communion rail in church with others to take the sacrament, an elderly, poor man approached the altar rail and happened to kneel by the Duke, who on public occasions wore on his breast a number of medals and badges presented to him as marks of honor. The poor man by a glance, saw that without intention he had bowed by the side of this distinguished general and Duke, and as if he felt he had intruded too near to dignity, began to move more distant;

the Duke saw the man's action, and conjecturing his motives, he therefore laid his hand on the poor man,—and in a subdued voice said, "Keep your place, we are all alike here." Such a thought might well rule at the family altar, "keep your place, we are all alike here."

Servants having formed this habit at family prayer, may carry it with them to other families, or to their own homes in future life.



## CHAPTER IV.

THERE SHOULD BE FOR EACH HOUSEHOLD A PRUDENTLY SELECTED TIME, AND THAT TIME PUNCTUALLY USED, WHEN THE GREATEST NUMBER CAN BE PRESENT.

To the ancient Israelites as a pastoral employed people, it was commanded that the fathers should impart to their children the sacred truths:—"When thou liest down" that was in the evening, "and when thou risest up" that was in the morning. Deut. 6: 7. There are many different employments in modern times, and it may be variations in the same family. Some working in the nights, others in the days—some begin early, others later—therefore it is well to have an established rule to meet the convenience of the greatest number, if not all the members of the family. Farmers may have to leave home at an early hour, hence devotions should be accordingly—but not at an unreasonable early time, it might be imprudent zeal to begin before most of the family can be present. I could mention a pious but very wakeful farmer, who generally arose before all the family did, so he would sing loudly, read, and shout his prayers so as to wake up and annoy the household, so early, that the feelings in them were more prejudicial than edifying—and when they did make their appearance, they came in for a con-

siderable scolding for their idleness in bed. None of this made their devotional feelings any better.

It would likely be impossible to make an universal rule to suit all families—yet it seems to me generally, morning devotions should be before breakfast, as some may find it needful to leave the table and home for business or school, before others are ready. It may be quite an inconvenience for such to delay, until all have taken their meals.

Years ago I used to preach occasionally at a rural place called Awhalian, in the Isle of Man. At nights I was entertained at a farmhouse—the proprietors were two maiden ladies, members of my church. The Protestant Episcopal Curate boarded there and afterwards married one of these ladies. The time in the morning was announced to the hands and all concerned by a large bell, a few minutes before the exact time to begin. A minute before commencing, one of these sisters stood in the large kitchen, Bible in hand, waiting the fixed minute. I remember one morning, the Curate was a little behind in making his appearance; no matter for that, the exercises were began and carried out by these devote women, punctual to time.

Children readily follow the examples of parents, whether good or bad. If there is family devotions at a fixed time, children will expect the same. A friend of mine who keeps a store and has prayer before breakfast, one morning in the absence of his wife, he being in a hurry, called the children to the breakfast table.

A very small daughter said,—“Pa we have not had prayers.” The father felt this as a gentle reproof to be thus reminded by his little girl. Even little children sometimes notice when there is a want of punctuality. In the good time coming when people will be readily influenced to do right, we are told, “A little child shall lead them.”

It may be objected, where there is a large family it is next to an impossibility to be exact. But I think the larger the family, so much the greater need of punctual exactness. This is clear in relation to a ship's crew—a large manufactory—an army—the postal service and a railway to have a fixed hour, yeaminute, must have a definite work done; if not so performed, the consequence may be fatal. I think Milton said, “order was one of the first laws of heaven.” If thousands of men can be prompt at a fixed time—and system regulate them—it seems to me there must be a deficiency in organizing and commanding power, if a parent cannot regulate a household for family devotions and instructions.

It was a very pertinent inquiry by Paul in regard to a Christian church official, after having said he should rule his own house—then the question, “If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God? I Tim., 3: 5.

At some places and times I have been somewhat pained when devotions have been deferred after a late breakfast then a considerable time had been given to say the best

of it, to very common-place talk; while some have been quite uneasy to go and perform other duties, but did not wish to leave the room until devotions were over—and children with their hats and coats on, school books and slates in hand anxious to go, but told they must not go before prayers; the children begging it might soon be through—and when the last eater has finished, it is suggested to “read only a short Psalm,” or wave the reading that morning, or worse still, excuse reading and prayer because the children will be too late at school; whereas, devotions before, or less talk at breakfast, would have given ample time for reading and prayer.

True there will be occasions when shorter exercises are justifiable. A many years ago, when Rev. Robert Moffet had visited England, and in the morning he was going to re-embark for Africa. Amidst a many calls of friends for last words and farewells, and numerous packages—ere he left the house in London, he found only time to read a moderately long Psalm and prayer. But really, the time generally needed for family devotions is seldom long—and if persons were commonly as diligent in rising to do that, as they are to be at the factory or mill, it would be punctually attended to. The advice of the Committee of the American Tract Society to the persons employed to travel and sell their books is, that when entertained at a house for the night, in town or country—to rise in time to unite with the family in morning devotions.

But there are days when the duty to God, our children and ourselves can have a fair amount of minutes when all may unite to sing a hymn also, such as:

Awake my soul, and with the sun  
Thy daily stage of duty run;  
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful vice,  
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

Wake, and lift up thyself, my heart,  
And with the angels bear thy part,  
Who all night long unwearied sing  
High praises to the Eternal King.

All praise to Thee, who safe hast wept,  
And hast refreshed me while I slept;  
Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake,  
I may of endless life partake.

Lord, I my vows to Thee renew;  
Scatter my sins as morning dew;  
Guard my first spring of thought and will,  
And with Thyself my spirit fill.

Direct, control, suggest this day,  
All I design, or do, or say;  
That all my powers, with all their might,  
In Thy safe glory may unite.

And when all the company around the family altar devoutly unite to sing thus with the spirit and the understanding also, probably the fragrance of holy incense, or the savor of the morning sacrificed lamb, ascended not in the old times more acceptably to heaven, than the contrite hearts of a devout family while caroling such a hymn.



In some instances converts from heathenism show better examples than professors in our Christian land. At a large public missionary meeting in Spurgion's Tabernacle, London, the Rev. G. E. Butts, Primitive Methodist missionary, of South Africa, speaking of his labors among the natives, referred to an African and his wife, who had turned from heathenism, and after a year and a half probation, were received into the church, when they had been publicly baptized, also five of their children, as members of a Christian home. The missionary then added,—“It was a great joy to one's heart, to be able to feel quite sure, that henceforth not a day in their home would be allowed to pass by, without the Bible being read to those dear children, and without their being gathered round the father and mother, and prayer offered up for them. Reader have you been a member of a Christian church for years, is your conduct at home equal to these African converts? Or will you allow them to rise up in judgement and condemn you for your neglect?”

The little time which is needed at the family altar is not always freely bestowed. We are too apt to give little to God and much to ourselves. We magnify the short minutes at devotion, and minimum what we spend in commonplace talk, idleness and amusement. The one we give grudgingly—the other is dealt out with no sparing hand. Time occupied in useless conversation at the table, goes quickly as an express train—but with some the duration of devotion, is at

the speed of a heavily loaded lumber wagon drawn by oxen up a steep hill. God loveth a cheerful giver not less at the family altar—but some feel, and act, as if the time and services thereof, was an unjust tax laid on them.

Under the law of Moses, offerings to God were required if an animal to be: (1) A firstling of the flock. (2) It must not be lame or with a blemish. (3) It should be presented with a *free heart willingly*. Do you thus sacrifice and serve at the family altar?

Having referred principally to the services in mornings, let us think a little on other parts of the days for worship and instructions at home.

Late at night is not a desirable time. After a hard, industrious and lawful day's work, the body and mind lags, and needs rest, and some of the younger persons have perhaps fallen asleep, or needs to do so.

When the circumstances allow it, a season earlier than the last thing at night is really preferable—but as I stated before no universal uniform rule can be fixed—circumstances alters cases. From my standpoint as a minister, I will name two cases to illustrate: At rather a late hour I became the guest for a night, at the residence of a brother minister. Before going to my bedroom, reference was made to family prayer. He told me that they had performed that duty, as it was their rule to have prayer in relation to their supper, at 6 to 7 o'clock. He was pastor of one church in

town, and his week night service commenced a little after 7 o'clock, and sometimes official meetings had to be held after this—it might render it late before he returned home; and some at home might need to have gone to bed. The like rule would suit laboring people that end their work at 6 or 7 o'clock, for at a later hour part may have gone out to meetings, duty or pleasure; others at home may have gone to bed.

Some persons defer their evening family service so late, as to allow the younger persons to go to sleep—or send them off to bed before devotions are attended to, this is not wise for, nor profitable to the little ones.

When I labored in Manchester circuit, I boarded with Rev. William Antliff. We generally had to preach week day evenings in city or country four or five times weekly. We left home in the afternoons, and oft times had to be present at official meetings, after the congregations were dismissed—hence we were generally late when we reached home; therefore we had family devotions in relation to breakfast and dinner hour. This may also suit others, while for some it might not be quite convenient for the greater number to be on hand.

## CHAPTER V.

THERE SHOULD BE DISCRETION AS TO THE LENGTH OF THE PRAYER, READING OR SINGING AT FAMILY DEVOTIONS.

I think it was stated to this effect by good Matthew Henry in relation to this subject—That those who pray with their families do well—Those who pray, and *read* the Bible do *better*—but such as *pray*, *read* and *sing*, DO BEST.

There are some who have to be at their work on an early and late hour, which leaves but limited time for meals &c., and yet a little time may be given to devotions. I knew of a family, several members of it had to be at the factory before 6 o'clock in the morning—not more than three quarters of an hour to go home, breakfast, and return to work—but they used time for family prayer.

In some cases it may be exceedingly unwise to read a long Scripture lesson, especially late at night when the persons are tired. I was once at fault in a friend's house late in the evening in reading a long Psalm, the length of which I did not when I commenced, observe. I was disgusted with myself for doing so on

that occasion, and yet when the company are prepared for it, in body and mind, and circumstances warrant it, how delightful it is to see the church in the house, assembled for reading, prayer and singing! What Doctor Watts wrote in his spiritual songs for children, in regard to public worship, might be applied to gatherings at home.

“Lord, how delightful ’tis to see  
A whole assembly (or family) worship Thee;  
At once they sing, at once they pray,  
They hear of heaven, and learn the way.”

By the shores of Delaware and Maryland, the Nanticoke flows—a deal of its shores from Seaford downward, are flat and low—but some five miles from Seaford there is a hill, on this stands an old farmhouse, on front of it there is a deep well. On that hill by the well, I have stood gazing on the river as one of its bends was in sight. The steamboats and sailing vessels gliding on the smooth waters—I have thought that hill would be a very pleasant place on which to build a beautiful mansion. Time and again, I have stayed for the night at that old farm house with the family which did reside there. I have enjoyed free conversation on general and Christian subjects; but it is the devotions by the family altar there, to which I wish to refer. There was Bible reading and prayer, and then the aged father with his gray hair and long beard, with something like the venerable grace of an old patriarch, rose to his feet as did his wife, children and



some grand children—and with a clear but somewhat jarring voice he led off, and the family united with him to sing an evening hymn.

“The DAY is past and gone,  
The EVENING shades appear;  
O may we all remember well,  
The NIGHT of death draws near.

We lay our garments by,  
Upon our beds we REST;  
So DEATH will soon UN-robe us all  
Of what we are possess’d.

Lord, KEEP US SAFE THIS NIGHT,  
Secure from all our fears;  
May angels GUARD us while we sleep,  
’Till morning light appears.

And when we early rise,  
And view the MORNING SUN,  
May we set out to win the prize,  
And on to GLORY RUN.

And when our days are past,  
And we from time remove,  
O may we in Thy BOSOM rest,  
The BOSOM of Thy love.”

So he sang as a Patriarchal Priest of his family and master of the choir of his household; but he will do it no more there, for he has gone from the hill by the Nanticoke—to stand on Mount Zion. He is not visible now to his family at the farm, but is I presume, with the family of the first born resident in Paradise. He has changed the views of the smooth waters of the

Nanticoke, for the more beautiful waters of the river of life. He does not live at the lonely old farmhouse, he has gone to occupy the mansion prepared for him among the "many mansions."

Not now with weary body and sweaty brow does he lower the old oaken bucket down the deep well to bring up water to slack his thirst,—for he is near the Crystal River of Life, and where he can with joy, draw living water from the wells of salvation.

He does not now sing "The evening shades appear," he has entered in the glory of the Lord, he will never see the sun go down—for day without night he will dwell in God's light, and eternity seem as a day. Not now on the farm plowing, harrowing, sowing, reaping or thrashing with toil and sweat in sight of the Nanticoke, but passed to the other side of Jordan, where there is rest for the weary. It is of little importance whether his name is cut into a marble tomb stone or not—but so that the angels can read beautifully registered in the Lamb's book of life, "William Ellis—Saved by the Blood of Jesus." He would have been higher than human, if he had had no defects—but let every parent do as William Ellis, read, pray and sing by his own family altar.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE MORALS IN OTHER RESPECTS OF THE PARENTS SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH A HOLY PRIESTHOOD OF THE FAMILY ALTAR.

If father or mother belch out peevish bad temper, unmerited upon the children—or some unbearable scoldings on the servants, before or immediate after prayer or during the day, it may neutralize the effects of the devotions, and perhaps be remembered in the next service.

Those who have a family altar ought also to be consistent in their business transactions with the world, and with their minister and the church.

The conversations on the holy Sabbath ought to be as they become the Gospel. It appears out of character to be devout at the family altar—then talk on trade, farming, price of markets and political topics on the Lord's day. So to read a short lesson or longer one in the morning, but devote a considerable time on Sundays to look over a worldly newspaper, is not in harmony with a spiritual life.

So of the actions on God's day—you should dispense with all acts of work that can be done on week days. Wood chopping, shoe blacking, shaving and

other domestic works, should be anticipated on Saturdays—the inconsistencies of such actions, can not only be noticed by religious persons, but carnal individuals observe them, and may ridicule the person for inconsistency.

The Protestant missionaries in the South Sea Islands, labored much to reform and convert the natives, and among other tasks, they went from house to house to teach the converts the duty and mode of family prayer. At the instigations of the Catholics the French invaded Tahite, and some of the French officers attended some of the natives family prayer services at the houses. The French saw afterwards some behavior they thought inconsistent in these newly reclaimed heathens, and so ridiculed their family prayer. Carnal persons have keen eyes to distinguish what is not in harmony with piety. Consistency is a jewel.

I might tell of a family who had some visitors one evening, they were going to serve wine to the company, but the question was asked: Which had they better do—have prayer, or wine first? There was a reply—better have prayer first, and wine after, because it was said they did not feel so well disposed for prayer, when they had used wine. Now whatever indisposes for prayer, ought to be dispensed with altogether. Consistency I say again is a jewel.

No person who has a family altar, ought to follow any course of life or actions inconsistent with prayer—“Thy Kingdom come.” A Methodist minister in Eng-

land was invited to preach special services in a distant town. He arrived on Saturday evening, went to the house, by name and number and street where he was to be entertained. He was politely received by the servant—he enquired if the gentleman was at home; he was told he was very busy, he generally was on Saturday night, as he conducted a large retail spirit business in another part of the building—therefore the minister would have to excuse him that night at family prayers; but as he did not open for business on Sundays, he would be at liberty to see, and enjoy his company in the morning, also to have full time for family prayer. The minister asked the servant to go and request him to come to him for a short time at least. Answer came back—there were so many customers, he was so exceedingly busy he hoped the minister would excuse him—wished he would make himself free in the use of anything there was in the house. The minister sent again to him—“Tell him I am going to leave the house, and I would wish first to inform him, why I do so.” At length he came in a hurry, with some professed politeness. The minister in brief told him, that when he stayed with a family, it was his custom to pray for God’s blessings on the family that they might prosper, and that they might succeed in their labor, and be blessed with a fruitful increase in their basket and store; but as he had learnt since he came, he had been directed to the residence of a person who was engaged in a business, that was as he thought, a curse to human



bodies, and caused many souls to be lost, he would not implore for God's blessing upon such an occupation which was a blight and curse to the country. So he had resolved not to accept entertainment from the profits of such a traffic—nor be where he could not implore God's blessing on the labors of his host. The spirit dealer seemed astonished and crestfallen, and the minister left the house. Which was consistent, the liquor dealer or the minister?

Oil and water do not readily blend—neither do Gospel piety and alcoholic poison. I knew of an ale house called by the sign of "Noah's Ark" in Bilson, England. To a late hour on Saturday night, there would be men drinking there. On Sunday morning there would be a Methodist class meeting held in the same house. Were these harmonious, or do they disagree?

The family altar is as sacred, and may be made more useful to a family, than a Methodist class—(against which I charge no blame) but the family altar was set up thousands of years before the class meeting was instituted. The devotion of the household, properly and profitably attended to may be more useful, as it should be more frequently used. The class meeting is attended once in seven days, family devotion ought to be fourteen times in a week. But as before asserted, no head of a family who has family prayer ought himself, to allow any course of life or action inconsistent with the prayer, "*Thy Kingdom Come.*"

May every Dagon idol fall before the altar at home, as Dagon fell in his temple before the Ark of God!

## CHAPTER VII.

FAMILY PRAYER CONSTANTLY AND CONSISTENTLY CARRIED OUT, IS A CRITERION OF PERSONAL PIETY.

I am open to admit this service, or any other form of Godliness may exist without the vital power, yet I do not understand how really pious persons can be consistent, if they have no family altar—any more than I can conceive a person can be truly Godly without private prayer. It is not only a PERSONAL, but a FAMILY duty to search the Scriptures as our Saviour tells us. Individuals and families should not only grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, II Peter, 3: 18, but as I have shown, *families* should be daily instructed in the knowledge of God's Commandments. Deut. 6: 7; Deut. 11: 19-20; and where this duty is neglected personally or relatively, Godliness and sacred knowledge will be at discount. This is not my notion only and the opinion of the church, but the general verdict of worldly people.

I knew the case of a young minister who was charged before his church authorities with immorality in the house where he boarded. In the official inquiries it was asked, if he had attended and conducted family prayers where he resided, and the answer was "no, he

had not," this weighed as negative evidence of his positive guilt he was charged with. If you knew a minister residing in a house who did not call the inmates to family prayer, would you not censure him? On the other hand might a minister blame an household in which there are several church members if they have no family altar? A lay preacher connected with a church in Delaware told me he had urged on the members the duty of family prayer, but he believed there was not one family in the said church that had regular family devotion. Can such a church as a whole be strong in grace when there is such general neglect of religious duty at home?

Let earnest piety at Christian homes be fervent, so will be the church,—but if the fires on the household altars die down—that they seldom, or never burn—and there be no living sacrifice there on them, then the Divine glory will depart from, or leave the public sanctuary, and the ministers may exclaim as a woman in distress did “I-cha-bod! the glory is departed!” When the ark of God was captured by the Philistines. I Sam. 4: 21.

During the reign of Charles I. and Charles II. evangelical religion in Scotland was greatly suppressed and persecuted—but while Oliver Cromwell, and the English parliament ruled Scotland, religion did prosper (See History of the Covenanters, Vol. I, pages 136-7). Kirton wrote: “Every parish (of which there were 900) had a minister, every village had a school.

all children of age had a Bible, every minister was obligated to preach three times each week. The writer lived for years in a parish where he never heard an oath. And you might have rode many miles before you heard any. You could not for a great part of the country have lodged in a family where the Lord was not worshipped in reading and singing and prayer."

Is this the case in the neighborhood you live in?

A minister on travel sought entertainment at a public boarding house. When he was about to depart he inquired of the proprietor what his bill was, adding that he was a minister. He supposed the charge would not be so much as to other boarders. The proprietor replied: "Are you a minister? Why, you have not acted like one. You have never spoke to me or my family about religion. You have never read the Scriptures to, or prayed with my family; you have not acted like a minister, so I shall make no reduction to you as a minister.

Men in holy orders should perform holy duties. Wherever they may reside they should let their light shine in the house they live in, at home or abroad, and not be like the foolish virgins, let their lamps go out.

You admit this is proper for ministers—can it be otherwise for members? Do not put your candle under a bed, or for the time hide it under a bushel—but set it on the table, that all may see it who are in the house and so let the flames from the family altar illuminate the home circle. In some paper or periodical you may

have read what I am now about to relate, so far as memory serves me.

Two men travelling in a thinly settled country requested board and lodgings for the night at a country house. One of the travellers was a professed Christian, the other a skeptic. The man who resided in the house had a rough course aspect, not calculated to create much confidence in the minds of these travellers—but in the North Western States persons on travel are not often refused the hospitality of the house—so these two were not refused the entertainment for the night. But the visitors had as much fear as the man of the house, so they mutually agreed that one only should sleep at a time, the other should keep watch, and so alternate. They kept up conversation to a late hour to diminish the time for sleeping. At length the rough looking man said, "Strangers, it is past our bed time, but it is our custom before we lie down to read a chapter out of this old Book," (as he stood up to reach a Bible from a shelf). "If you wish to retire you can before reading, or if you like to stay until we have had the chapter you are free to do so." The visitors said they would like to remain present at the reading, they did so, and then the man kneeled down, thanked God for the blessings during the day, asked God to protect him and his family in the night, and make them faithful servants of God; he also asked the blessing of the Lord on the visitors. All retired to bed, all slept. Next day as the travellers had resumed their journey, the Christian



said to his companion, "We both slept; neither of us watched last night as we had agreed." "No," replied the skeptic, "when I saw that rough spun fellow take down the old Bible, read and pray, I thought we might sleep without fear of anything bad being done to us."

Those who read the Bible and devoutly pray in their family circle exhibit a criterion of safe Christian character. This skeptic was convinced of this. But had there been no Bible read, no prayer offered, not only the skeptic might had his fears which might have kept him awake, but the Christian also been afraid and wakeful that night. The Bible and prayer seemed to say to the troubled waters of their minds, "Peace be still," and then all was calm.

## CHAPTER VIII.

REGULAR AND EVEN OCCASIONAL FAMILY PRAYER HAS A BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN, SERVANTS AND VISITORS.

There was a woman who thought if she could only touch the hem of Jesus' garment she should be healed, and so she was. It is hardly possible for any person to come in contact with pious individuals, religious services, or Divine truths, but what some present or future benefits may result therefrom, though it may seem as narrow as the hem of the Saviour's garment. So a visitor's occasional presence at the family altar may feel a little warmth from the fire, and if not inflamed by a live coal from the altar, possibly a spark of love from it may kindle a desire in some cold heart, and that kindled flame eventually may rise towards heaven in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Once I had a journey among the Pennsylvania mountains. In order to connect with a train I had to stop all night at a country hotel. I inquired of the proprietor if it would be convenient and agreeable to have some of the family and inmates together as could attend for a little time to have Scripture read and prayer; he said he would arrange and he did so. We met in a sitting room. I read from the Bible and

prayed. Among the company there was a commercial traveller. He afterwards requested a private interview with me. He told me some of his experience and his downward moral grade—solicited my advice. I gave it to the best of my knowledge, exhorted him to reform, give his heart to God, and live a pious life. He was very teachable and seemed a good deal impressed. Whether the gospel seeds I attempted to sow in him were production of a good crop I know not. I am not aware I ever saw him since; but the Scripture read, the prayers offered, and the good advice I gave him, I presume to associate with the Divine assertion of the Author of Truth: "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isa. lv: 10, 11.

I select the following from *The Christian Standard* of March 23, 1893, Philadelphia :

A Roman Catholic woman was engaged some time ago to work in a Protestant family where prayer was offered night and morning. She listened to the prayers and was impressed by them. Afterwards on one occasion, hearing that they had been enjoying a home gathering, she said to some one, "O I wish I could have been there, I should have *liked to have heard the*

*prayers!*" We know not how far the reading and home worship influenced that untutored Romish woman, or how she felt the power of prayer in that house. Would God that every house might have a family altar.

But God's Word daily read in the family must have a wider and more lasting effect on those repeatedly subject to line upon line and precept upon precept to inspire their souls and influence their lives. In the beginning of my ministry it was my privilege to board with a pious family. One son began to prepare himself mentally, as he intended to go abroad as a missionary, but he died early. There remained four, very pious young women. Years afterward two departed this life having a blessed hope of heaven; the others left, for years—and up to the latest of my knowledge of them—they remained members of the church. The father said to me, "I attribute the conversion of my children under the blessing of God to my strict attention to family prayer."

Those Christian parents who would offer their children to God as living sacrifices should each day bring them to the altar at home.

Farmers may have noticed that occasionally a seed may be covered by a stone or a clod and be much longer in coming up—yet after a while it may grow—though forgotten or unexpected. A friend told me of four young persons, the children of a pious mother and father, who always had prayer at nights with the family.

One of these parents died, and then the other as I think suddenly. Not one of these children were converted. These young persons of course on account of their loss were full of sorrow; but there was another privation impressed them after the last death, as one remarked: "We never went to bed at night without mother or father praying for God to protect us all while we slept." Each one confirmed it. Then all burst again weeping. One requested the other to pray before they lay down to sleep, and so the request went round, but all declared their inability; then they wept again and said, "We never went to bed while our parents lived without family prayers." They all cried aloud again and again. Some pious neighbors heard them, came in, made inquiries why they had burst out in such weeping. They were told, and one of the visitors was asked to make family prayer. Other friends hearing the loud lamentations, came in, They were directed to seek salvation that night, even at that hour—they were instructed in a present salvation, and they sought and professed to find saving grace that night. The all seeing eye who beheld the sinful hardness of the Phillipian jailor's heart, his sudden conviction and quick conversion, all in one night, was and still is able to save a whole family in a night, or even a nation in a day. Paul speaks of departed saints as absent from the body, and then present with the Lord. Jesus tells us there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Did angels carry the news of



these four conversions to their parents who were "present with the Lord"? If so would there be joy in their minds as they stood near the throne of God circled within angel ranks? That at their former earthly home there had been laid on the family altar four "broken and contrite hearted," children of those pious parents who had nightly pleaded with God for them.

The beneficial results of family devotion may be illustrated by the following facts. A minister's wife told me of a case. She was acquainted with a pious English man and his wife, now in this country, they punctually attend to family prayer, they have six children converted, four of them were saved at the family altar.

The Rev. Macquay, an M. E. minister, informed me that his father was a firm old style Methodist, he regularly maintained house-hold services. He had twelve children, ten of them became pious church members. This minister's wife came of a similar religious stock, she was one of ten children, all of whom were converted, and joined the church.

Recently I was talking with an elderly colored man a Mr. Brown, he keeps a store near Little Zion Church, Maryland, he was born when it was not lawful to teach a slave to read in that state. He can not read, but for forty years, twice a day he has had family prayer at his humble home. If customers come to the store, prayer must not be put off. He has seven children, I asked him, "Are any of these united to a Christian Church?" he replied "Five." Reader have you had more privi-

leges than this unlearned colored man, and have you neglected the altar at home?

I will mention a pious man and his wife who maintained religious services at home. After other sons where converted there remained one named Alfred not converted. In addition to the morning and evening devotions, one night this godly father and mother spent a whole night in prayer with and for Alfred's conversion. He did not then fully realize the blessing. He left home for college, he had repeated mental struggles. When the time of his vacation came, he purposely neglected reading the Bible. He tried to disbelieve the Scriptures and went so far as to ridicule religion. But the holy living of his father dwelt in his thoughts and at times he wished he was like his father, yet during his vacation and in his visit at home, he refused to take any part in family devotions. The night before he left home, the rest of the family had retired, but he continued talking with his mother on general subjects, she abruptly said to him "Alfred wont you be a Christian? Wont you begin now?" Alfred paused a few seconds, then, said "yes mother, I will". Alfred and his mother knelt down and prayed until long after midnight for his salvation. He went from home to follow his profession at a distance, but he was not fully satisfied in his soul. He kept seeking and finally he realized peace and joy by believing in Jesus. Home made prayers resulted in his conversion.

I will add the case of a minister ( J. T. W. ) after

his thirty six years successful ministiral labors he wrote to the Epworth Herald, thus, "A present salvation is my joyful experience. I cannot willingly give the experience which I have written without paying a loving tribute to the parental home where the family altar was a living flame, prayers fervent, and full of faith.

My early conversion at sixteen, was largely due to the faith, sweetness and purity of a Christian home. My call to the holy ministry came with my conversion.

Can parents who neglects family devotions, show, or expect to have as many conversions among their children as there were in the cases I have here named? Home worship and instructions is likely to make religious families.

Since writing the preceeding I attended a service for prayer and experience. A Christian brother from Virginia, who was a stranger to us, spoke his experience from which and conversation with him afterwards, I learnt that he was a father of six children. He had service at his family altar twice a day. Some one in his family took turns with him reading the Bible.

One of his children was converted when only eight years old. All the others were saved by the time they were fourteen years. As a farmer and berry grower, he employed a number of persons none of whom had been in his service the length of two years, but had been converted, one a colored man had also become an able minister.

A pious Presbyterian sister informed me that her

father, who resided at Dover, Delaware, was a carriage builder. He employed a number of men, and several apprentices, the later boarded at his house. Some he employed were Roman Catholics. All his household were expected to be present at his family altar. While he was zealous and consistant as a Methodist, yet he was tolerent to those who had different religious principles. There was one of his men who wished to wor-worship at his Catholic church miles distant, therefore his employer W. R. Cahoon, used to furnish him with a conveyance on Sundays, once a month, to attend his church. Several of his apprentices became M. E. Ministers. He is a good master who not only teaches his apprentices the arts and principles of his trade, but also, the doctrines and duties of Christianity.

#### THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD.

The Rev. J. L. Straughn, M. P. Minister at Harrington, informed me that from his earliest recollection, his father who was a farmer, had reading of the Bible and prayers with his family and work people, before breakfast daily. In this he was very punctual, also in other engagements, he was never known to miss a railroad train, or a steam-boat at starting, nothing was permitted to prevent family devotions. Some said if Mr. Straughn, Senior, had been notified that the final judgment was to take place that day yet the duties of the family altar must be attended to before breakfast.

#### THE HARVEST THAT FOLLOWED.

He had five daughters and two sons, all five of the



daughters have joined the church, and the Rev. J. L. Straughn is a minister, one son who has not professed conversion, requires his children to attend the House of God; there are quite a number of grandchildren, a large majority of them have become Christians.

*Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.*

Parents would you have a godly posterity? Then sow God's seed by the family altar, that your children may grow up as olive plants around the table of the Lord.

Pious persons at the family altar should plead for the salvation of persons present; though at that time they are quite careless. Indeed they so much the more need the fervent effectual prayers of those officially at the altar, and possibly by and by they will turn to the Lord and seek salvation. It is said that the constant dropping of water will wear away a stone. A good woman told me of a man who got religion, and felt it his duty to have family prayer in his house morning, noon and night. He was a tradesman and had an apprentice, who was required by his master to be present at these services as well as the children of this employer. The youth did not relish these exercises, but he had to be present, and so continued until the time of his apprenticeship ended, and then this young man removed to a distance. The trade of the master increased and he became more busily occupied. He then thought as he had so much on hand he would omit the



dinner time service. After a while he had calls early in the mornings, therefore sometimes he would cut short the morning service and hurry off to his work, and in some instances he was late home in the evenings, and evening sacrifices began to burn quite dull on his altar, his plea was solicited goods had to be sent off and accounts had to be entered. In short though he held his church relationship, and was present at public Sabbath services, yet family prayer and reading the Scripture were passed over hastily and in a number of instances quite neglected, yet his business enlarged and his profits increased but he had leanness in his soul, neither did he enjoy the preached word in the public sanctuary as formally. A year or two transpired, one day a letter came to him; it was from his former apprentice. He referred to the period he had lived with this man, acknowledged that frequently the reading of the Bible and prayers were wearisome to him, but the lessons he heard at those services lived in his memory—had followed him from place to place and led himself to read, study and pray, and that he was now converted—and wished to thank his former master for requiring him to be punctually present at family prayers. Also he hoped his former employer would never abate in his regularity of such duties. This letter was both a reproof for his neglect and an encouragement to resume his devotions at home.

We are told in the Bible to sow beside all waters; to sow seed in the morning (say of youth) and in the

evening (of old age) not to withhold the hand as we know not which shall prosper most. It shall be our duty to sow,—plant and sometimes to water—and it remains for God to bless with growth and give the increase.

The reading of a chapter, conversation on the same, and questioning concerning its contents may make a lasting impression on some one present which will never be obliterated, and possibly may lead some such person to repeat a similar mode in a future time, in some other domestic gathering or even in a more public manner. Seed scattered by unskilled hands may produce a harvest for some unknown reapers to gather.

Once I was kindly entertained all night at a farmer's house named Kaine, not far from Farmington, Delaware. I suggested for our evening lesson to read about a good man who one time was a very prosperous farmer, but he became unfortunate, lost all his property and his children. I read the first chapter of Job, gave a short explanation on the passages and questioned all present on verse by verse. A boy who had been hired by Farmer Kaine from the city seemed much interested in the questions.

Two or three years afterward a young man met me and said, "I suppose you do not recollect me." I answered, "No." "I was at Mr. Kaine's when you read about Job and questioned us on the verses." I replied, "I remember you now." I learnt he had become a member of the church and afterward he had a desire

to be a minister. At the time he last accosted me he was a student at Westminster College. I do not say that the reading of that chapter was the means of his conversion, but that that lesson lived for years in his mind.

He is now pastor of a city church in Maryland. At a recent yearly Conference in conversation with a relative of mine, he referred with some interest to the lesson concerning Job I read at Mr. Kain's house.

The Egyptians sow their bread seeds on the waters of the River Nile,—the waters subside, the seeds sink into the mud; the harvest may be seen after many days.

It may not be pleasing to look too much on the black side of any subject, yet by way of contrast, I will give one case. Recently I was conversing with an aged woman, who had been a church member for a number of years, yet she said they did not have family prayer in her house. I asked how many of her sons or daughters had united with a church. Her reply was, "None."

Suppose Indian corn is planted in fairly good ground, and neither cultivator nor hoe is used about the plants all the growing season, the rain will beat the soil down hard, hot sunshine will bake it, the growth will not be prosperous, true, weeds will grow; but if the hoe or cultivator is freely used, though it be a dry season and poor land, it will probably yield good results. Apply this to spiritual, moral and religious culture, or to no culture of your sons and daughters, what kind of a crop will you expect?

## CHAPTER IX.

LET US GLANCE AT SOME WORTHY EXAMPLES OF DOMESTIC WORSHIP RECORDED IN THE BIBLE.

As I have remarked, I repeat, the Scripture is only a very brief history of many events, personal and family transactions which took place during more than four thousand years.

The statement that God furnished Adam and Eve with coats of skins, has naturally led to the supposition that these had been taken from animals they had sacrificed, perhaps of some lambs, said to have been slain, from the foundation, or beginning of the world; which rite formed a precedent for their posterity—and it seems reasonable to think that when their sons sacrificed that their parents, though not named, were present at the same family devotion.

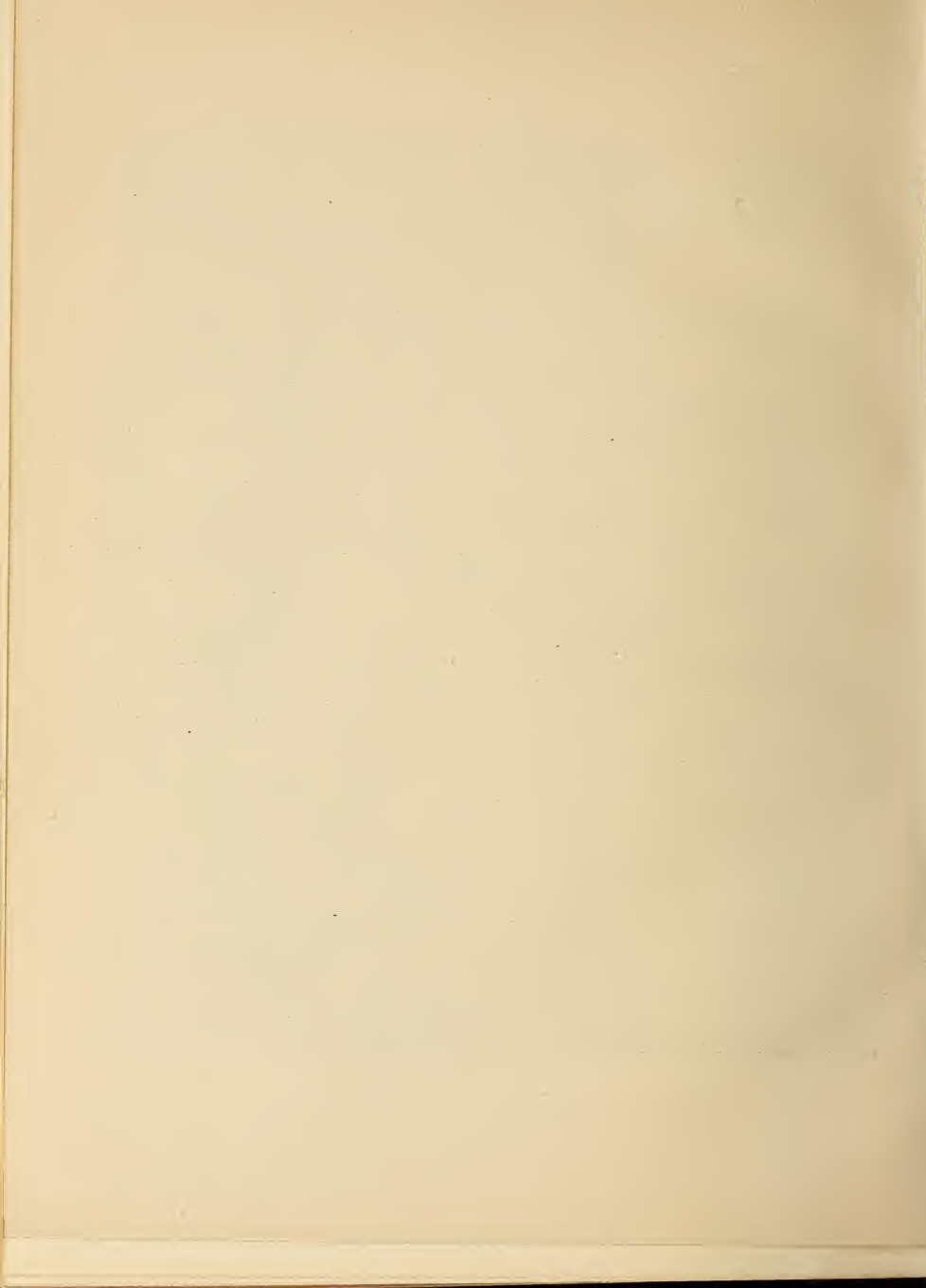
Abel being more pious than Cain his offering was accepted by the Lord. To me it seems this is a short, and partial narrative of an instance of family worship. The Lord from heaven declared his approval of the sincere piety of Abel, and the godly devotion existing in the first family of mankind.

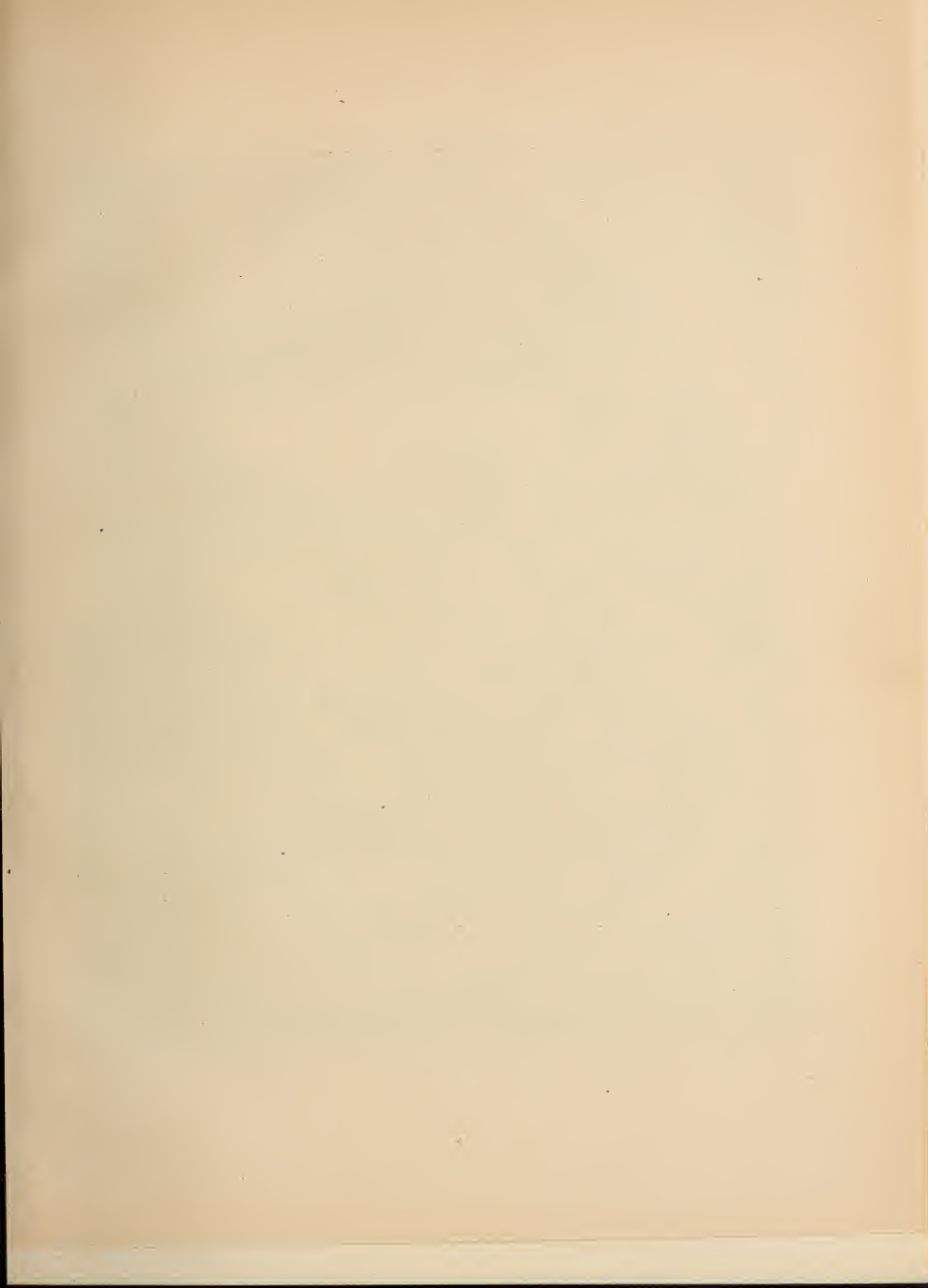
Noah, directly after he came out of the ark, call-













"AS THE SAVOR OF THE OFFERING ASCENDS."—(See page 65.)

ed his sons and their wives to the family altar—eight persons constituting that visible church.

We may readily imagine the delightful feelings of Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives, after being shut up in the ark for more than a year, when they came forth and again trod the earth, which had put out its green herbage, and was gemed with beautiful flowers; they the only family on earth saved from a watery grave.

How willingly Noah and his sons collect stones, and build an altar,—while their wives gather dry wood, and from the clean animals and birds select the choicest from the flocks, and the rarest and fairest of the feathered tribes, from which Noah, the patriarchial priest, may take out the best to sacrifice on the altar. Picture the fuel piled on the altar, the victims slain, then lain on the wood the fire kindled, the flames ascending heavenward. Father Noah stands by the sacrifice, regulating it as it burns, and he as the mouth piece of the family sending to God their grateful praise and prayer, while with humble, over-flowing hearts the family bows down before the God of creation and Providence.

In the distance facing the sun there is a dark cloud, a gentle dewy rain falls, and as the sunshine passes among the glittering drops, a rainbow is seen on the dark cloud: a beautiful rainbow with its brilliant hues, with all the prismatic colors of light, its graceful form a semi-circle; not the warrior's bow bent towards the earth and its inhabitants, but a bow of peace, its



position pointing upwards, with the world wide horizon as a string on which human souls may place the arrows of praise and supplications to be sent up to God.

And as the savor of the offering ascends, the Lord looks down approvingly on that praying family while they surround the altar.

And God spake unto Noah, and his sons with him saying: "I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you \* \* \* neither shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood \* \* \* I do set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth \* \* \* The bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature." Gen. 9: 8-17.

Reader, you think it quite proper for Noah's family to collect round their domestic altar for praise and prayer, because God had protected them for more than a year in the ark—so surely, though the Lord has not had you shut up for a year with a lot of wild and tame animals, yet he has fed you all your life long, giving you the range of a wide and beautiful world, and provided Christ the Saviour as an ark, a life boat of salvation for your soul, to save you from being overwhelmed in the lake which burns with brimstone and fire. Have you a family altar round which you collect your children? Does God look down from heaven and see you and yours offering up humble and contrite hearts? Do



you and yours render unto the Lord according to the benefits you have received?

You may have read concerning a rainbow about the throne in heaven, and of Him who sat on the throne who shone like a jasper and a sardine stone; (Rev. iv: 2, 3) and you may have been told of the golden altar before that throne, and of a golden censer containing holy incense to be mingled with the prayers of all saints, and the smoke of these ascending before God. (Rev-8,3, 4.)

Reader, from your family altar do you send prayers up to be deposited in the golden censer, to be made fragrant with the incense, Jesus merit's, that the sweet odor of these may rise before God on his throne? If you have not done so, now resolve henceforth you, by your *family prayers*, will be represented in,

THE GOLDEN CENSER,  
AND ON  
THE GOLDEN ALTAR,  
BEFORE  
THE RAINBOWED THRONE.  
IN HEAVEN.

We have already been reminded of the family altars of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when they travelled from place to place.

Probably Job lived before or at the date when Moses existed—when types and shadows pointed to Jesus and his sacrifice—otherwise he had no knowledge

of the Lamb of God that was to be slain for the sins of the world—but he offered burnt sacrifices according to the number of the members of all his children; this he did continually—or as in the margin “all the days.” He was not only devout, but he was diligent, zealous and anxious—for he rose from his bed early to this family duty. He had 11 thousand 500 animals to be cared for and the needful number of servants, required to attend them, but he had ten children, so he felt it a religious obligation to sacrifice for each one an animal every morning—that if they had individually sinned there should be an atonement and prayers for each a one; he did not let temporal business push out conscientious religious duty at the family altar—perhaps even the ten commandments had not yet been given, he lived hundreds of years before the greater light of Christianity had illuminated the minds of people (Job 1. 2-5.)

At a large public meeting of Israelites, Joshua reminded the people of the marvelous goodness God had shown to them, and wound up his address in words to this effect “Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and if it seem evil into you to serve the Lord choose you this day whom ye will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Josh. 24. 14-15) I would suggest this last sentence of Joshua’s resolution would be suitable to be printed in large letters, framed and glazed, and hung up in every Christian’s home as a motto.

In the 101st Psalm the author meant to have domestic religion in his home. He declared—"I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." And as to the hired servants he said, "My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me. He that walketh in a perfect way he shall serve me, he that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

It is said that the songs of a nation influence the character of that people—for war or peace, for licentiousness or piety. The Psalms were the National Songs or hymns of the Israelites, and what these contained indicated the moral, civil and pious motives, and duties they felt to their God, themselves, and their children. Hence we may well infer as the fervor of the songs of the Hebrews at home so their character elsewhere. For example imagine the pious Hebrew families singing from the seventy-eighth Psalm, 1st to 8 verses inclusive.

"Give ear, O my people to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter my sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should make them

known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their hearts aright and whose spirit was not steadfast with God."

We here witness them reminding themselves of their obligations to God and to their children, in the duty of instructing their families religiously, Yes teaching their sons and daughters at home as commanded by God through Moses, God's law giver in former generations. Now if we are ignorant of the musical tune the Hebrews sang this and other pious Psalms in at home, we have some of the holy words which may admonish Christian parents to perform similar devotions and instructions in their houses.

Shall the personal and family religion of the Israelites exceed that of more enlightened Christians who have all the old, also the New Testament, and hundreds of pious hymns and harmonious tunes—shall we not be as good? Shall we let the ancient Jews exceed us? Ought not we to love our Bibles, our God, and be as well versed in holy writ and as pious as them of old? Did not there exist a prophetic anticipation of the greater efficiency of holy people in the later,—that is the days of Christianity, for it was promised by God,



"I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of supplication—and they shall look on me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first born"—  
 "and he that is feeble among them shall be as David."  
 (Zach. 12. 10-8.) In this day with more free dispensation of the Holy Spirit, more numerous copies of the Sacred Scriptures and a freer distribution of the bread of life, pious persons ought to be stronger in grace and practice than in Old Testament times. Cornelious was a Roman soldier serving God according to the light he had—both he and his household were devout (Acts 10: 2, 24, 33) before he had knowledge of salvation by Christ. God gave him special instruction by an angel to send for a Christian teacher, namely Peter—and when the servant of the Lord came, Cornelious called his kindred and his household together to hear and learn. If we study what is said of him in Acts. 10., even before he was born of God through Christ—may be we shall learn he was a better example personally and relatively, in his home devotions than many in our day, who are professedly converted and of some years standing members of a Christian Church, for Cornelious feared God with all his house, gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.

Of Timothy we are told that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, which was able to make him



wise unto salvation through faith in Christ. 2 Tim. 3: 15. Who were his instructors in God's word? Why his pious mother and grandmother. The place where he had his instructions was his home—the time he was taught was when he was a child, the result of such Scriptural teachings was to prepare him to receive Christ as taught in the Gospel by Paul—ending in his qualification as a minister and Bishop of a Church (II Tim. 1: 5. II Tim. 1: 3. I Tim. 4: 6.)

Likely if there were more of such home instructions—such mothers and grandmothers, there would be more Timothys who from childhood would know the Scriptures—and might become ministers of Jesus.

Home religion produces personal piety—but a home without religion is likely to hatch ungodly wild birds. Good soil is likely to grow good crops. Do you mothers, grandmothers and fathers daily train your children in the knowledge of the Bible, or do you neglect it? If so how can you expect your children to become pious?

Consider again what is said of Timothy "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures. Here we have a fact stated—that a child knew the Scriptures—and that at a time when the Scriptures and all books were only to be had in written copies, as printed books were not made until 13 or 14 hundred of years after Timothy lived, how much greater the opportunities now for parents to teach children to know the Bible? Bibles and all books being so much more plentiful and cheaper in our days: yet I have discovered in the children of

professed Christian parents, yes, sons and daughters of mature age, a great deficiency of Scripture knowledge, even of Bible history, to say little on principles and doctrines of the Word of God. But if the sacred volume was read and taught twice daily to the family as God required the Israelites to do in their homes, it would lead to the same results as in Timothy that from a child they would have known the Holy Scriptures.

You who daily neglect to pray with and instruct your families, would suppose a minister exceeded his duty if he was to attempt to unchristianize you for that neglect, you would not like to be ranked with heathens, with them that know not God, and classed with the persecutors of the people of the Lord. Yet Jeremiah seems as an inspired prophet to have done so. (Jer. 10:25.

God's Word is like a mirror that depicts human deformity as well as excellences. We may see in this glass our character, what manner of persons we are—enabling us to see ourselves as others see us, and thus we may discover our blotches—deformities—our filth and deficiencies—let us be fully admonished not to go quickly away from this glass—and so forget what manners of personal character we have. If we do, others may see us and not forget what manner of persons we are.

While Paul lived at Corinth he became acquainted with a Jew that had lived in Rome, but with others of his nation had not been suffered by the Emperor to continue to live there—his name was Aquila and his

wife Priscilla. Paul and he had the same trade, tent makers, and likely Priscilla helped them to stitch the tent clothes together—and had much talk concerning Christ and heart experience as they sewed the canvas—for Paul was at Corinth eighteen months—but he left there for Ephesus—and Aquila also. Likely while at Ephesus he wrote to the church he had formed at Corinth and within that letter sends the greetings of Aquila and Priscilla and that of “*The Church* that was in their house,” to the Christians at Corinth. I Cor. 16: 19. On this verse in Matthew Henry’s Commentary are the following remarks, “We read of a church in a private family. It is very probable that the family itself is called the church in their house. Note every Christian family should in some respects be a Christian Church. In some cases (for instance, were they cast away on a foreign shore) where there are no other Christians, they should be a church themselves, if large enough and live in the use of all ordinances; but in common cases they should live under the directions of Christian rules, and daily offer up Christian worship. Where two or three are gathered together and Christ is among them there is a church.”

When there was again toleration for Jews to live in Rome Aquila and his wife returned to Rome—that was before Paul resided there as a prisoner—and he wrote an Epistle to Rome, in that letter he greets Priscilla and Aquila, likewise the Church that was in their house. This pious pair had a church in their house as

I have stated when they lived at Ephesus—they went again to Rome and had one again in their house. (Rom. 16: 5. Matthew Henry on this verse wrote—"It seems then a church in a house is no such an absurd thing as some make it to be. Perhaps there was a congregation of Christians that used to meet there at stated times, then no doubt it was like the house of Obed Edom blessed for the Ark of God's sake, others think the church was no more than a religious, pious, well governed family that kept up the worship of God. And doubtless it had a good influence upon this that Priscilla the good wife of the family was so very eminent and forward in religion (she had been an instructor of the eloquent Apollos, eminent that she is often named first (before her husband) a virtuous woman that looks well to the ways of her household may do much towards the advancement of religion in her family. When Priscilla. and Aquila were at Ephesus though but sojourners there, yet they had a church in their house, and the same at Rome," Pagan neighbors though the people were. A truly, godly man will be careful to take religion along with him where so ever he goes. When Abraham moved his tent he renewed his altar. Gen. 13:18.

In Colossians iv: 15, mention is made of Nymphas and "The church in his house." Scott in his comment wrote "Nymphas seems to have been an eminent Christian at Laodecia, whose well ordered family might properly be called a Christian church or a society by whom the Lord was statedly worshipped."



Paul seems to have been the agent in the conversion of Philemon who took his religion not only into his heart, but also into his house—Philemon had a servant Onesimus, who was supposed to have acted dishonestly to his employer, then ran away. Providence over ruled and this servant man through Paul's preaching became a converted Christian—Paul wrote a letter to Philemon, sent Onesimus back. In that letter we learn that Philemon had a religious household. Paul greets several of Philemon's acquaintances including, as is supposed, the sons and daughters and servants of Philemon who had become Christians, named by Paul to Philemon as "The Church in thy house."

Matthew Henry wrote thus "The religious worship and order kept up in his house is called *a church* and such should all families be, nurseries of religion, societies where God is called on, his word read, Sabbaths observed and the members instructed in the knowledge of God and of their duty to him. Neglect of this is followed with ignorance and all corruption."



## CHAPTER X.

SCRIPTURE READING.—SIR WILLIAM JONES' OPINION ON THE BIBLE.—MODES OF READING GOD'S BOOK.—A DAILY METHOD FOR THE WHOLE YEAR.

The reader may observe that in perusing the preceding pages, I have advocated instruction to the family by the study of the Scriptures. Let any one glance at the character of individuals, families, or nations who have carefully read and acted upon the lessons of this sacred Book, they will find that these have had a higher morality, and frequently a more extended intelligence in many respects, than such as have rejected the Bible. There would be no difficulty in collecting the opinions of many distinguished men to confirm this, and show the Bible to be the best book in the world, but I think it will be enough and quite in place with this closing chapter, to mention the distinguished William Jones, who was knighted in the year 1783, so he was called Sir Wm. Jones; his father died when he was three years old, and up to seven years of age he had his early education through his enlightened, prudent and pious mother. He afterwards became one of the most eminent oriental scholars in England. He traveled the world, extensively he became supreme judge in India, he mastered twenty eight languages. He was a man

of fervent piety, of strict devotional habits, his highest faith was in the merits and intercession of the crucified Savior. In the books which Sir William wrote he stated his settled belief in the truth of the Bible revelation, but an inscription which he wrote on the fly leaf of a family Bible I think proper, as coming from such a learned, extensive traveler, and pious man, to insert in this little book; He wrote; "I have carefully and regularly perused the Holy Scriptures, and am of an opinion that the volume, independently of its Divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and fine strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever language they may have been written." Reader this was the opinion of a very learned, wise, and pious man ; and if you would be moral, good and wise, qualified for duties in this life, and happiness in the next, search the Scriptures. In the foregoing pages I have suggested no particular mode of reading the Bible in the family. The habit of opening and reading a chapter on any page thereof is good, but not the best way. Suppose a person studying history, geography, music, arithmetic or any science in that manner. No teacher would advise a child to study a common reading or spelling book in that way, if a proper and general knowledge of the same is to be acquired. There is a simple and easy system, if the Scriptures are studied historically, begin the Old Testament, and read a chapter therefrom in the morning; in the afterpart of the day begin and go through the New

Testament a chapter each day. Or if it is preferred to read topically, as a guide take from the International Sunday School lessons the portions suggested daily for the preceding week. But I will here add a methodical guide for the daily reading of the whole Bible in one year: this was compiled by the Rev. T. Barker, a Wesleyan Methodist Minister. It has been of much service to me for fifty years.

## JANUARY.

## FEBRUARY.

Jan.	Genesis	I. Chron.	Matt.	Feb.	Gen.	2 Chron.	Rom
1	1	1	1	1	32	4	4
2	2	2	2	2	33	5	5
3	3	3	3	3	34	6	6
4	4	4	4	4	35	7	7
5	5	5	5	5	36	8	8
6	6	6	6	6	37	9	9
7	7	7	7	7	38	10	10
8	8	8	8	8	39	11	11
9	9	9	9	9	40	12	12
10	10	10	10	10	41	13	13
11	11	11	11	11	42	14	14
12	15	12	12	12	43	15	15
13	13	13	13	13	44	16	16
14	14	14	14	14	45	17	1 Cor. 1
15	12	15	15	15	46	18	2
16	16	16	16	16	47	19	3
17	17	17	17	17	48	20	4
18	18	18	18	18	49	21	5
19	19	19, 20	19	19	50	22	6
20	20	21	20	20	Exodus 1	23	7
21	21	22	21	21	2	24	8
22	22	23	22	22	3	25	9
23	23	24	23	23	4	26	10
24	24	25	24	24	5	27	11
25	25	26	25	25	6	28	12
26	26	27	26	26	7	29	13
27	27	28	27	27	8	30	14
28	28	29	28	28	9	31	15
29	29	2 Chron. 1	Rom. 1	29*	10	32	16
30	30	2	2	* When this month has only 28 days the lessons for the 29th must be read on the 28th.			
31	31	3	3				

## MARCH.

Mar.	Exodus	2 Chron.	2 Cor.	Apr.
1	11	33	1	1
2	12	34	2	2
3	13	35	3	3
4	14	36	4	4
5	15	Ezra 1	5	5
6	16	2	6	6
7	17	3	7	7
8	18	4	8	8
9	19	5	9	9
10	20	6	10	10
11	21	7	11	11
12	22	8	12	12
13	23	9	13	13
14	24	10	Gal 1	14
15	25	Nehem. 1	2	15
16	26	2	3	16
17	27	3	4	17
18	28	4	5	18
19	29	5	6	19
20	30	6	Eph. 1	20
21	31	7	2	21
22	32	8	3	22
23	33	9	4	23
24	34	10	5	24
25	35	11	6	25
26	36	12	Phil. 1	26
27	37	13	2	27
28	38	Esth. 1	3	28
29	39	2	4	29
30	40	3	Col. 1	30
31	Lev. 1	4	2	

## APRIL.

Lev.	Esther	Col.
2	5	3
3	6	4
4	7	1 The. 1
5	8	2
6	9	3
7	10	4
8	Job. 1	5
9	2	2 The. 1
10	3	2
11	4	3
12	5	1 Tim. 1
13	6	2
14	7	3
15	8	4
16	9	5
17	10	6
18	11	2 Tim. 1
19	12	2
20	13	3
21	14	4
22	15	Titus 1
23	16	2
24	17	3
25	18	Phile.
26	19	Heb. 1
27	20	2
Numb. 1	21	3
2	22	4
3	23	5
4	24	6

MAY.				JUNE.			
May	Numb.	Job	Heb.	June	Numb	Prov.	Mark
1	5	25	7	1	36	15	4
2	6	26	8	2	Deut. 1	16	5
3	7	27	9	3	2	17, 18	6
4	8	28	10	4	3	19	7
5	9	29	11	5	4	20	8
6	10	30	12	6	5	21	9
7	11	31	13	7	6	22	10
8	12	32	Jas. 1	8	7	23	11
9	13	33	2	9	8	24	12
10	14	34	3	10	9	25	13
11	15	35	4	11	10	26	14
12	16	36	5	12	11	27	15
13	17	37	1 Peter 1	13	12	28	16
14	18	38	2	14	13	29	Mic. 1, 2
15	19	39	3	15	14	30	3, 4
16	20	40	4	16	15	31	5, 6
17	21	41	5	17	16	Eccles. 1	7
18	22	42	2 Pet. 1	18	17	2	Nah. 1, 2
19	23	Prov. 1	2	19	18	3	3
20	24	2	3	20	19	4	Habak. 1
21	25	3	1 John 1	21	20	5, 6	2
22	26	4	2	22	21	7	3
23	27	5	3	23	22	8	Zeph. 1, 2
24	28	6	4	24	23	9	3
25	29	7	5	25	24	10	Hag. 1, 2
26	30	8	2 John	26	25	11, 12	Zech. 1
27	31	9	3 John	27	26	S Song 1, 2	2, 3
28	32	10	Jude	28	27	3, 4	4, 5
29	33	11	Mark 1	29	28	5, 6	6, 7
30	34	12, 13	2	30	29	7	8
31	35	14	3				



JULY.				AUGUST.			
July	Deut.	S. Sol.	Zech.	Aug.	Judg.	Isaiah	Acts
1	30	8	9	1	3	31	1
2	31	Isaiah 1	10, 11	2	4	32	2
3	32	2	12, 13	3	5	33	3
4	33	3	14	4	6	34	4
5	34	4	Mala. 1	5	7	35	5
6	Josh. 1	5	2	6	8	36	6
7	2	6	3, 4	7	9	37	7
8	3	7	Luke 1	8	10	38	8
9	4	8	2	9	11	39	9
10	5	9	3	10	12	40	10
11	6	10	4	11	13	41	11
12	7	11	5	12	14	42	12
13	8	12	6	13	15	43	13
14	9	13	7	14	16	44	14
15	10	14	8	15	17	45	15
16	11	15	9	16	18	46	16
17	12	16	10	17	19	47	17
18	13	17	11	18	20	48	18
19	14	18	12	19	21	49	19
20	15	19	13	20	Ruth 1	50	20
21	16	20	14	21	2	51	21
22	17	21	15	22	3	52	22
23	18	22	16	23	4	53	23
24	19	23	17	24	1 Sam. 1	54	24
25	20	24	18	25	2	55	25
26	21	25	19	26	3	56	26
27	22	26	20	27	4	57	27
28	23	27	21	28	5	58	28
29	24	28	22	29	6	59	Ps 1, 2
30	Judges 1	29	23	30	7	60	3-5
31	2	30	24	31	8	61	6 8

## SEPTEMBER.

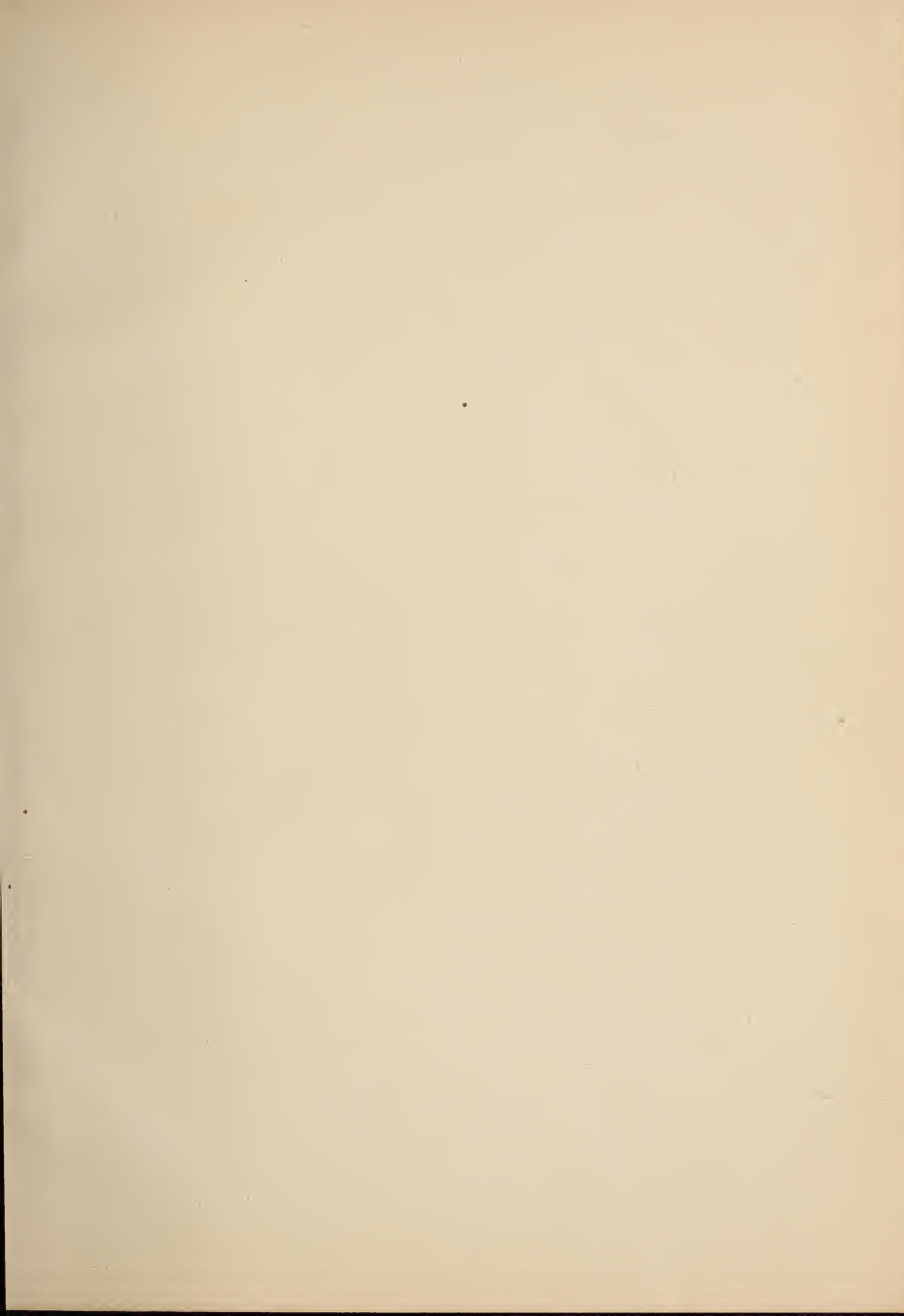
Sept.	1 Samuel	Isaiah	Psalm
1	9	62	9, 10
2	10	63	11—13
3	11	64	14, 16
4	12	65	17
5	13	66	18
6	14	Jerem 1	19—21
7	15	2	22
8	16	3	23—25
9	17	4	26—28
10	18	5	29, 30
11	19	6	31
12	20	7	32
13	21	8	33
14	22	9	34
15	23	10	35
16	24	11	36
17	25	12	37
18	26	13	38
19	27	14	39, 40
20	28	15	41—43
21	29	16	44
22	30	17	45
23	31	18	46, 48
24	2 Sam. 1	19	49
25	2	20	50
26	3	21	51, 52
27	4	22	53, 55
28	5	23	56, 57
29	6	24	58, 59
30	7	25	60, 61

## OCTOBER.

Oct.	2 Samuel	Jerem.	Psalm
1	8	26	62, 63
2	9	27	64, 65
3	10	28	66, 67
4	11	29	68
5	12	30	69
6	13	31	70, 71
7	14	32	72
8	15	33	73
9	16	34	74
10	17	35	75, 76
11	18	36	77
12	19	37	78
13	20	38	79, 80
14	21	39	81, 82
15	22	40	83, 84
16	23	41	85, 86
17	24	42	87, 88
18	1 Kings 1	43	89
19	2	44	90, 91
20	3	45	92, 93
21	4	46	94, 95
22	5	47	96, 97
23	6	48	98, 99
24	7	49	100, 101
25	8	50	102
26	9	51	103
27	10	52	104
28	11	Lament. 1	105
29	12	2	106
30	13	3	107
31	14	4	108, 109

NOVEMBER.				DECEMBER.			
Nov.	1 Kings	Lament.	Psalm	Dec.	2 Kings	Ezekiel	John
1	15	5	110—112	1	23	30	13
2	16	Ezekiel 1	113, 114	2	24	31	14
3	17	2	115, 116	3	25	32	15
4	18	3	117, 118	4	Hosea 1	33	16
5	19	4	119 to v 40	5	2	34	17
6	20	5	v. 41—80	6	3, 4	35	18
7	21	6	v. 81—128	7	5	36	19
8	22	7	v. 129—176	8	6	37	20
9	2 Kings 1	8	120—124	9	7	38	21
10	2	9	125—127	10	8	39	Rev. 1
11	3	10	128—130	11	9	40	2
12	4	11	131—134	12	10	41	3
13	5	12	135—136	13	11	42	4
14	6	13	137—139	14	12	43	5
15	7	14	140—142	15	13	44	6
16	8	15	143—144	16	14	45	7
17	9	16	145—147	17	Joel 1	46	8
18	10	17	148—150	18	2	47	9
19	11	18	John 1	19	3	48	10
20	12	19	2	20	Amos 1	Dan 1	11
21	13	20	3	21	2	2	12
22	14	21	4	22	3	3	13
23	15	22	5	23	4	4	14
24	16	23	6	24	5	5	15
25	17	24	7	25	6	6	16
26	18	25	8	26	7	7	17
27	19	26	9	27	8	8	18
28	20	27	10	28	9	9	19
29	21	28	11	29	Jonah 1, 2	10	20
30	22	29	12	30	3, 4	11	21
				31	badiah	12	22

"When quiet in my house I sit,  
 Thy Book be my companion still  
 My joy thy sayings to repeat,  
 Read o'er the records of thy will,  
 And search the oracles Divine  
 Till every heart-felt word be mine."







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